

Integral Faith

"Homily helps and liturgy resources highlighting care for our common home."



Catholic Climate Covenant™
Care for Creation. Care for the Poor.

Homily Helps and Petitions for the 4th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Cycle A (January 29, 2023)

Homily Helps

† Scripture Passages to Note:

Zephaniah 2, 3: A people humble and lowly [shall] take refuge in the name of the Lord: the remnant of Israel.... They shall pasture and couch their flocks with none to disturb them.

Psalms 146: Blessed are the poor in spirit; the kingdom of heaven is theirs!... The Lord keeps faith forever, secures justice for the oppressed, gives food to the hungry... The Lord gives sight to the blind; the Lord raises up those who were bowed down..

1 Corinthians 1: God chose the foolish of the world to shame the wise, and God chose the weak of the world to shame the strong.

Matthew 5: Blessed are the poor in spirit... they who mourn... the meek... they who hunger and thirst for righteousness... the merciful... the clean of heart... the peacemakers... they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness.... Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me.

† Comments for the Day:

Zephaniah speaks of the faithful remnant of Israel and notes how they seek refuge in the Lord. Because of their faith and their concern for one another, they will fear no one and no situation. In his message to the community at Corinth, Paul reminds the sisters and brothers that everyone must be included in efforts to organize our lives and work toward justice in our world. Those who are considered foolish and weak often put to shame those who are considered wise and strong. Each of us has something to offer, and it's important that we do.

The Responsorial Psalm and the Gospel both remind us that we are all responsible for one another, especially for the weakest and most vulnerable. Like Jesus, we may very well be reviled and persecuted for our willingness to speak out against injustice, inequality, and misery.

Pope Francis repeats the message of today's readings in *Laudato Si*. He calls us to seek the common good and to minister to all our sisters and brothers. Moreover he extends the notion of caring. He notes how we are connected to and in constant interaction with the world around us, all of it – earth, air, sea, and sky. We should never see ourselves as separate from our environment, somehow authorized to exploit our planet and its resources at our whim. That includes such actions as releasing methane and other greenhouse gases to run our vehicles and warm our homes, or using millions of plastic bags for shopping, releasing chemicals that pollute the water, or cutting down trees that would otherwise help alleviate climate change.

This resource is provided by Catholic Climate Covenant in collaboration with the Integral Faith Team, a group of male and female religious, priests, and lay people dedicated to serving the Church.

Pope Francis also speaks out on behalf of future generations: we cannot be concerned merely with our own good and that of those around us. The common good applies to those who will come after us – our children, grandchildren, and whole communities, many of whom may find it hard to survive in an era of climate change. We must not bequeath to them a world of what Pope Francis calls “debris, desolation, and filth.”

Are we caring for God's creation that sustains all life? Are we taking care of our own home, neighborhood, and city, including the marginal areas where the poor quarter and live without basic necessities? Are we willing to challenge and shame the presumably wise, wealthy, and powerful? In short, can we count ourselves among those whom Jesus considers "blessed"?

† **Passages from *Laudato Si'* to Note:**

Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live. We are part of nature, included in it and thus in constant interaction with it. (139)

The common good is the sum of those conditions of social life which allow social groups and their individual members relatively thorough and ready access to their own fulfillment. (156)

The notion of the common good also extends to future generations.... Since the world has been given to us, we can no longer view reality in a purely utilitarian way, in which efficiency and productivity are entirely geared to our individual benefit. (159)

What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?... What is at stake is our own dignity. Leaving an inhabitable planet to future generations is, first and foremost, up to us. The issue is one which dramatically affects us, for it has to do with the ultimate meaning of our earthly sojourn. (160)

Doomsday predictions can no longer be met with irony or disdain. We may well be leaving to coming generations debris, desolation, and filth.... The effects of the present imbalance can only be reduced by our decisive action, here and now. (161)

Related Prayers of the Faithful

Option 1: That we learn to extend the notion of the common good to all our sisters and brothers, to those who will come after us, and to the care for our planet, let us pray to the Lord....

Option 2: That we will grow to be more like Jesus by reaching out to those who are vulnerable, live in poverty, need healing, and are marginalized, extending to them the mercy, love, and healing of God, let us pray to the Lord....

Further Resources

Feedback: info@catholicclimatecovenant.org

Webpage: www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/resource/english-homily-help

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