

Integral Faith

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



Homily Helps and Petitions for the 5th Sunday of Lent, Cycle C (April 3, 2022)

Homily Helps

† Scripture Passages to Note:

Isaiah 43: Thus says the LORD, who opens a way in the seas, a path in the mighty waters...See, I am doing something new! Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?

Psalms 126: Restore our captives, LORD, like the dry stream beds of the Negev.

Comments for the Day:

The theme for today's readings might be "newness," a newness that is much more than a replacement of what has worn out. It is a spectacular newness, a newness beyond compare.

The passage from Isaiah calls to mind the first creation narrative in Genesis, where we read that God calmed chaotic waters before calling forth the dazzling universe of which we are a part. The ancient myth would have us believe that everything comes from water. Ancient Israel's version of this myth suggests that we must pass through water to enter new life. This story of crossing through water became the primary metaphor used to describe Israel's deliverance from Egypt and creation as a people, as well as our own death to sin and rebirth in baptism. The Psalm response compares the reestablishment of the Israel after exile to the restoration that water brings to dry stream beds.

It is because of the indispensability of water that it has always been used as a metaphor for life itself. The fact that water can appear to bring dry land back to life underscores its mysterious powers. But how can water continue to bring life if it becomes polluted or unsustainably used, and actually undermines the land's life-enriching powers? Furthermore, water really knows no population boundaries. It is either universally life-giving, or it is universally death-dealing. If some populations do not experience this, it is because they do not experience it yet.

At the heart of the current crisis facing life-giving water is humans' flawed understanding of our relationship with the natural world. Because we have learned to manipulate nature, including the flow of water, to meet our needs and desires, we think that we actually have total control over it. In reality, it is we who are dependent on water, not it being dependent on us. To think otherwise is to be guilty of the fundamental sin of the garden – hubris, otherwise known as "defiance of the gods." We see the consequences of this sin in the effects of climate change; in raging chaotic waters that destroy everything in its path; in dried up farmland aching for refreshment, and in loss of mountain snowmelt that millions depend on for life.

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.

Climate change is dismantling the beautiful world of God's creation, of which we are a part. It is undoing God's life-enhancing order. It will continue to worsen unless we as a society, and as stewards of God's marvelous creation, accept the challenge from Pope Francis to "care for our common home."

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

The climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all. At the global level, it is a complex system linked to many of the essential conditions for human life. (23)

Fresh drinking water is an issue of primary importance, since it is indispensable for human life and for supporting terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. Sources of fresh water are necessary for health care, agriculture and industry. (28)

Some studies warn that an acute water shortage may occur within a few decades unless urgent action is taken. The environmental repercussions could affect billions of people. (31)

Interdependence obliges us to think of *one world with a common plan*....sustainable and diversified agriculture, developing renewable and less polluting forms of energy, encouraging a more efficient use of energy, promoting a better management of marine and forest resources, and ensuring universal access to drinking water. (164)

Related Prayers of the Faithful

Option 1: That we open ourselves to the power of God that can transform our faulty attitude toward elements of the natural world.

Option 2: That we learn to care for life-giving water, to ensure there is enough clean water for everyone who needs it.

Further Resources

Feedback: info@catholicclimatecovenant.org

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

Visit our webpage and sign up to receive these resources delivered to your email inbox each month.