

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 25th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Cycle A (September 24, 2023)

Homily Helps

† Scripture Passages to Note:

Isaiah 55: My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are my ways above your ways and my thoughts above your thoughts.

Psalms 145: The Lord is near to all who call upon him.

Philippians 1: Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.... If I go on living in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me.

Matthew 20: "The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out at dawn to hire laborers for his vineyard.... 'Why do you stand here idle all day?'"

† Comments for the Day:

In the parable in Matthew's Gospel, the vineyard owner hires a series of laborers at different points during the day. He then pays them *all* "the usual *daily* wage." It's a great puzzler, but that is what parables intend.

The landowner obviously represents God; that in itself is worth reflecting on. Too often we go about our daily human affairs thinking that the earth and all that's in it is ours to do with as we please. Instead, we need to embrace the perspective that tending the earth and working for the common good are tasks given to us by the vineyard owner. If we base our lives on such a perspective, then we will be working toward what Pope Francis calls "an integral improvement in the quality of human life."

Also note that the parable's landowner actively seeks out those looking for work. Those who "own" resources in our world need to engage all members of society. Unfortunately, not all receive an adequate daily wage. Do people have to work more than one job just to make ends meet? Do the people who shape our economy do so as stewards of the vineyard, or to enhance their own profits? Many financiers and executives reinvest profits to become even wealthier, rather than putting them back into businesses to employ workers at a fair wage.

The "Ecology of Daily Life" and the place of "Justice between the Generations" are two themes that Pope Francis addresses in *Laudato Si'*. He uses "big picture" thinking, taking into account the common good, as opposed to individuals or businesses looking out for themselves. The vineyard owner in the parable surely gained no personal benefit from paying a full day's wage

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even to those hired in the last hours. However, in doing so he raised everyone up to the same level, the very nature of justice and equality.

What if we had a society that raised everyone up and empowered everyone? This is a particularly important question when it comes to environmental degradation in poorer communities and nations, often caused by resource extraction or industrial activity. In these areas, the residents or indigenous people who depend on a healthy environment suffer while the wealthy get richer.

All of us need to keep expanding our vision so we learn to see as Jesus sees. How does the parable of the vineyard owner challenge us to grow in our perspective? *Laudato Si'* calls us to consider the common good and "an integral ecology" to apply this perspective to contemporary circumstances. It can improve the quality of human life for all.

† Passages from *Laudato Si'* to Note:

Interventions which affect the urban or rural landscape should take into account how various elements combine to form a whole which is perceived by its inhabitants as a coherent and meaningful framework for their lives. Others will then no longer be seen as strangers, but as part of a "we" that all of us are working to create. (151)

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. Intergenerational solidarity is not optional, but rather a basic question of justice, since the world we have received also belongs to those who will follow us. (159)

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)

Is it realistic to hope that those who are obsessed with maximizing profits will stop to reflect on the environmental damage which they will leave behind for future generations? Where profits alone count, there can be no thinking about the rhythms of nature, its phases of decay and regeneration, or the complexity of ecosystems which may be gravely upset by human intervention. (190)

Related Prayers of the Faithful

Option 1: That the Spirit lift our way of thinking to God's way of thinking, so that we can improve the lives of all in our common home, let us pray to the Lord ...

Option 2: That we realize that the earth's blessings we receive belong not only to us but also to our descendants, as well as others throughout the world, let us pray to the Lord ...

Further Resources

Feedback: [http://info@catholicclimatecovenant.org](mailto:info@catholicclimatecovenant.org)

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

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