

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 3rd Sunday of Ordinary Time, Cycle B (January 21, 2024)

Homily Helps

† Scripture Passages to Note:

Jonah 3: "Set out for the great city of Nineveh, and announce to it the message that I will tell you."... When God saw by their actions how they turned from their evil way, he repented of the evil that he had threatened to do to them, he did not carry it out.

1 Corinthians 7: The world in its present form is passing away.

Mark 1: "The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the Gospel."... (Jesus) saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting their nets into the sea.

† Comments for the Day:

Today's reading from the book of the prophet Jonah speaks about the city of Nineveh and its peoples. As the capital of the ancient Assyrian empire, an enemy of Israel, Nineveh was infamous for its bloodcurdling brutality. The story of God's mercy toward the people of Nineveh on account of their repentance is not history, but rather a parable. It was meant to astound its Jewish audience by speaking about the extraordinary mercy of God who is capable of forgiving and reconciling those considered the most abhorrent enemies of Israel. A more contemporary example might be speaking about a reluctant Jewish person being ordered by God to take the message of repentance to the heart of Nazi Germany, and then observing the leaders and officers putting on sackcloth and ashes as a sign of repentance.

The New Testament readings challenge us to seize the moment and act on the opportunities that God provides to usher in the fulfillment of the divine promises. St. Paul urges the Christian community in Corinth to act as if the world, in its present form, was passing away. It was the world filled with sin, ugliness, and brutality. The world that was emerging was one of divine love, mercy, and forgiveness, as well as human compassion, justice, solidarity, and joy.

In Mark's gospel, Jesus refers to the coming age as the Kingdom of God. When he sees Simon and Andrew, Jesus tells them to cast their nets into the sea. He also calls each of us, bidding us to be "fishers" of souls. We may interpret his call to cast our nets into the sea as an invitation to assume a contemplative stance and ask ourselves deep, probing questions: What type of progress is commensurate with the nature of who we are as human beings? What type of society, cities, and communities do we want to live in?

Throughout most of history, humans lived tribal or rural lifestyles, dependent on hunting and agriculture for survival. Over the past century, our world has experienced unprecedented urban

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.

growth. In 2008, for the first time, the world's population was evenly split between urban and rural areas. By 2050, 70% of world populations are expected to be urban. Most of this growth will occur in less developed countries, where inadequate housing in poor area is often asphyxiating shantytowns. Such conditions often spawn antisocial behavior, violence, and disease.

God's call to repentance can be interpreted as a call for a social transformation in which a more integrated social order emerges, one in which the inequality gap between rich and poor is diminished. But to follow Jesus on that path, we need to abandon our prejudices and old patterns of development dominated by greed and indifference to the plight of the poor. As Pope Francis highlights in *Laudato Si'*, we must work together to address the ecological challenges brought about by urban development, growing populations, and resource depletion.

† Passages from *Laudato Si'* to Note:

We have to realize that a true ecological approach *always* becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear *both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor*. (49)

Environmental exploitation and degradation not only exhaust the resources which provide local communities with their livelihood, but also undo the social structures which, for a long time, shaped cultural identity and their sense of the meaning of life and community. The disappearance of a culture can be just as serious . . . than the disappearance of a species. (145)

The feeling of asphyxiation brought on by densely populated residential areas is countered if close and warm relationships develop, if communities are created, if the limitations of the environment are compensated for in the interior of each person who feels held within a network of solidarity and belonging. In this way, any place can turn from being a hell on earth into the setting for a dignified life. (148)

Lack of housing is a grave problem in many parts of the world, . . . where makeshift shantytowns have sprung up, this will mean developing those neighborhoods rather than razing or displacing them. . . . creativity should be shown in integrating rundown neighborhoods into a welcoming city: "How beautiful those cities which overcome paralyzing mistrust, integrate those who are different and make this very integration a new factor of development!" (152)

Related Prayers of the Faithful

Option 1: For the organizations working to ensure that rundown neighborhoods are integrated into a welcoming city, let us pray to the Lord. . . .

Option 2: For city officials and planners, may the Holy Spirit inspire them to seek the common good and provide safe and affordable housing for families, let us pray to the Lord. . . .

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.