

## Homily Helps and Petitions for the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time, Cycle B (January 28, 2024)

### Homily Helps

#### † Scripture Passages to Note:

**Deuteronomy 18:** Moses spoke to all the people, saying: "A prophet like me will the Lord, your God, raise up for you from among your own kin; to him you shall listen."

**Mark 1:** All were amazed and asked one another, "What is this? A new teaching with authority. He commands even the unclean spirits and they obey him."

#### † Comments for the Day:

In the first reading, Moses tells his fellow Israelites that God will raise up for them a prophet to instruct and guide them. In the biblical world, prophets would either challenge or console the people. They would often speak an inconvenient truth, especially when those who were most vulnerable were being trampled upon.

Jesus' words and actions stood clearly within that prophetic tradition. He consoled the poor and oppressed, but he also challenged the establishment and the rigid, compartmentalized thinking of his time. In today's passage, Jesus expels an unclean spirit. Unclean spirits may manifest themselves in various forms, including hatred, lack of forgiveness, vengeance, human indifference and callousness, blindness, and ignorance of larger truth.

One of the most profound challenges facing humanity today is the fragmentation of knowledge. Humans have made remarkable scientific and technological advances, but that knowledge has not been contextualized in a moral universe that acknowledges the spiritual dimension of life. For example, we have created technologies that enable us to draw ancient fossil fuels from miles deep, oblivious to the fact that in the process we continue to destroy the earth and its ecosystems on which our lives depend. In so doing, we ignore the fact that we are stewards of creation – not masters of the planet. It also ignores the fact that we have an obligation to bequeath to future generations a world that is better, not more broken, that we found it.

Pope Francis and his predecessors act within the prophetic tradition of the Hebrew scriptures. They address the pressing social and environmental issues of our day. They teach with authority while exorcising the demons of cultural and ideological blindness, and misguided and illusory progress. They remind us that just because we *can* does not mean we *should*. Technology is an amoral force, not an end in itself. It is up to us to determine how technology should be employed and to what end.

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

"Contemporary man has not been trained to use power well," because our immense technological development has not been accompanied by a development in human responsibility, values and conscience.... We cannot claim to have a sound ethics, a culture and spirituality genuinely capable of setting limits and teaching clear-minded self-restraint. (105)

Life gradually becomes a surrender to situations conditioned by technology, itself viewed as the principal key to the meaning of existence. (110)

It cannot be emphasized enough how everything is interconnected.... Just as the different aspects of the planet – physical, chemical and biological – are interrelated, so too living species are part of a network which we will never fully explore and understand.... The fragmentation of knowledge and the isolation of bits of information can actually become a form of ignorance, unless they are integrated into a broader vision of reality. (138)

It is essential to show special care for indigenous communities and their cultural traditions.... In various parts of the world, pressure is being put on them to abandon their homelands to make room for agricultural or mining projects which are undertaken without regard for the degradation of nature and culture. (146)

A technological and economic development which does not leave in its wake a better world and an integrally higher quality of life cannot be considered progress. (194)

### Related Prayers of the Faithful

**Option 1:** For indigenous communities, that we may listen to their wisdom about how everything is interconnected, and that we are to treat one another and our mother earth with respect, let us pray to the Lord....

**Option 2:** For teachers and catechists, may they continue to form hearts and minds, nourishing in children and youth a personal integrity, care for the poor and for our common home, let us pray to the Lord....

### Further Resources

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

**Webpage:** [www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/resource/english-homily-help](http://www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/resource/english-homily-help)

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