



Homily Helps and Petitions for the Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Cycle B (January 1, 2024)

Homily Helps

† Scripture Passages to Note:

Psalm 67: May God have pity on us and bless us; may he let his face shine upon us. So may your way be known upon earth; among all nations, your salvation. May the nations be glad and exult.... May the peoples praise you, O God.

Galatians 4: When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to ransom those under the law, so that we might receive adoption.

Luke 2: The shepherds went in haste to Bethlehem and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told them about this child. All who heard it were amazed by what had been told them by the shepherds. And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart.

† Comments for the Day:

In this new year we find ourselves in a world torn by violence on many fronts. Today's consumptive greed drives our economy, while climate change drives drought and wildfires like those in Canada and Hawaii. The continuing impact of the industrialized world, including record-breaking consumption of fossil fuels for power and transportation, is imposing unsustainable demands on Mother Earth. Many are worried, even overwhelmed, by what's happening. Pope Francis makes clear in *Laudato Si'* and his new apostolic exhortation *Laudate Deum*, that climate change is indeed a crisis.

Like Mary in her time, we must accept our own situation and then act on it. This is necessary if we are to make our world better, as did she. Are we responding as Mary did when she was called by God to address the troubled world of her time? She brought Christ into the world and then worked with him to save us – and the world!

A good way to start 2024 is to imitate Mary by committing ourselves to respond to Pope Francis' call to intensify "care for our common home." We must avoid killing one another and Mother Earth by our own greed and negligence.

God has one family in one place. We are to love the whole human race as our family and so together care, as Mary did, for our common home. That love includes every nation and the family of every creature. Mary has long been called Queen of the Universe, and also Queen of Peace. We must work with her this year to help heal our broken world.

† Passages from *Laudato Si'* to Note:

Saint Francis is the example par excellence of care for the vulnerable and of an integral ecology lived out joyfully and authentically.... He was particularly concerned for God's creation and for the poor and outcast. He loved, and was deeply loved for his joy, his generous self-giving, his openheartedness.... He shows us just how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace. (10)

The originally harmonious relationship between human beings and nature became conflictual.... The harmony which Saint Francis of Assisi experienced with all creatures was seen as a healing of that rupture. (66)

When nature is viewed solely as a source of profit and gain, this has serious consequences for society. This vision of "might is right" has engendered immense inequality, injustice and acts of violence against the majority of humanity, since resources end up in the hands of the first comer or the most powerful: the winner takes all. Completely at odds with this model are the ideals of harmony, justice, fraternity and peace as proposed by Jesus. (82)

We can hardly consider ourselves to be fully loving if we disregard any aspect of reality: "Peace, justice and the preservation of creation are three absolutely interconnected themes, which cannot be separated and treated individually without once again falling into reductionism". (92)

In calling to mind the figure of Saint Francis of Assisi, we come to realize that a healthy relationship with creation is one dimension of overall personal conversion, which entails the recognition of our errors, sins, faults and failures, and leads to heartfelt repentance and desire to change. (218)

Related Prayers of the Faithful

Option 1: That you will help us to become climate changers, and learn to engage others to become healers of Mother Earth, we pray to the Lord...

Option 2: That all people will grow in awe and reverence for God's creation, knowing fully that our Creator is ever present and entrusts to us our common home, let us pray to the Lord...

Further Resources

Feedback: info@catholicclimatecovenant.org

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

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