

Integral Faith

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



Homily Helps and Petitions for the 5th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Cycle B (February 4, 2024)

Homily Helps

† Scripture Passages to Note:

1 Corinthians 9: If I preach the gospel, this is no reason for me to boast, for an obligation has been imposed on me, and woe to me if I do not preach it!

Mark 1: They brought to (Jesus) all who were ill or possessed by demons. The whole town was gathered at the door. He cured many who were sick with various diseases, and he drove out many demons.

† Comments for the Day:

St. Paul reminds us that it is incumbent upon all of those who are baptized to preach the gospel. It is not optional, but rather an essential requirement. It is non-negotiable. "Woe to me if I don't preach the gospel," Paul writes.

Many Christians misunderstand that preaching the gospel is something reserved to ordained clergy, religious, and catechists. Therefore, it is important to revisit the teachings from the World Synod of Catholic Bishops in 1971: "Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the gospel, or, in other words, of the church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation."

To preach the gospel, it is not enough to repeat the foundational truths as contained in ancient creedal statements. These truths and their implications have to be contextualized. In our contemporary context, this means that we must reflect on the social and environmental crises in the light of our faith. We must also allow the gospel to inform our search for solutions and to shape the strategies we adopt once we discern what the gospel demands.

Just as Jesus reached out to those who were ill or possessed by demons, the church today must follow in his footsteps and seek to heal, not only individuals, but also our society. Contemporary American society is plagued by political polarization, racism, economic inequality, and environmental injustice. It has abandoned its responsibility to care for and protect our environment at a time when pollution and climate change are most severely impacting the poor and vulnerable – born and unborn alike. The ideologies of hyper-consumerism, laissez-faire capitalism, and "liberty" without regard to the common good are just a few examples of what the ancient authors of sacred scripture would brand as demons.

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.

Today, let us evangelize care for the poor and vulnerable by sharing how our faith community expresses its tradition of preaching the Gospel in the context of the world's most pressing issues, like immigrants fleeing violence and persecution, wars that are killing thousands, and climate change that has already killed millions. Woe to us if we don't preach the Good News!

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

We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis, which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature. (139)

We may well be leaving to coming generations debris, desolation and filth. The pace of consumption, waste and environmental change has so stretched the planet's capacity that our contemporary lifestyle, unsustainable as it is, can only precipitate catastrophes, such as those which even now periodically occur in different areas of the world. The effects of the present imbalance can only be reduced by our decisive action, here and now. We need to reflect on our accountability before those who will have to endure the dire consequences. (161)

Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience. (217)

Related Prayers of the Faithful

Option 1: For Pope Francis and the entire Catholic community, as we preach the gospel and call for respect for human life, racial justice, non-violence, and inclusion of all the marginalized in our society, let us pray to the Lord...

Option 2: That as followers of Jesus, we may have courage to preach the gospel and commit ourselves to safeguarding "our common home" and helping to overcome every form of exploitation and oppression, let us pray to the Lord...

Further Resources

Feedback: IntegralFaithForLife@gmail.com

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

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