

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 Palm Sunday, Cycle B (March 24, 2024)

Homily Helps

† Scripture Passages to Note:

Isaiah 50: Morning after morning he opens my ear that I might hear; and I have not rebelled, have not turned back.

Philippians 2: He humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Mark 14: "This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many."... Peter remembered the word that Jesus had said to him, "Before the cock crows twice you will deny me three times." He broke down and wept.

† Comments for the Day:

Today we enter the most solemn week of the year. We accompany Jesus on a pilgrimage from the shouts of praise on Palm Sunday, to the silence and stillness of Easter morning. In prayer, word, song, silence, symbolism, procession, incense, color, and other ways, we try to make Jesus' journey our own.

Today we hear about Jesus as he offers his disciples his most intimate self: his body and blood. Then, like the suffering servant in Isaiah, he offers his body and blood, not as a passive victim but as one who has made a choice: to establish a new covenant between God and humanity. The God of this covenant is not an angry deity who demands sacrifice to make us acceptable. This God, in Jesus, is the God who shows us that He is no stranger to our pain, our tears, our fear. This God touches us just as we are. This God loves us just as Jesus loved his disciples, even those who failed him.

The celebration of Holy Week offers us another chance to orient our lives to Jesus whose whole life was oriented to the reign of God. His ear and his heart were always open to God's word. In his resurrection, Jesus became the Lord of Creation. Holy Week can become the occasion for us to find someplace in our lives for self-giving love.

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis offers us encouragement and concrete suggestions about how to express self-giving love: by working for things like environmental restoration, a healthy climate, and justice for all humankind. This is because God "lives in the heart of this world." Jesus poured himself out for humankind and gives himself to us in "a fragment of matter" out of love for humanity. Pope Francis tells us that efforts toward ecological health for the planet are God's work, and our self-giving love.

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.

We have seen many examples of this kind of love during the COVID pandemic. From exhausted health care workers who risked exposure the virus, to those who worked to provide the hungry with food, and many others. May they inspire us to give of ourselves to help others, at a time when crises like wars and climate change are increasingly impacting the poor and vulnerable most of all.

† Passages from *Laudato Si'* to Note:

In some countries, there are positive examples of environmental improvement: rivers polluted for decades, have been cleaned up; native woodlands have been restored; landscapes have been beautified thanks to environmental renewal projects; beautiful buildings have been erected; advances have been made in the production of non-polluting energy and in the improvement of public transportation. These achievements do not solve global problems, but they do show that men and women are still capable of intervening positively. For all our limitations, gestures of generosity, solidarity and care cannot but well up within us, since we were made for love. (58)

Jesus lived in full harmony with creation, and others were amazed: “What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?”... "By enduring the toil of work in union with Christ crucified for us, man in a way collaborates with the Son of God for the redemption of humanity". (98)

The Lord, in the culmination of the mystery of the Incarnation, chose to reach our intimate depths through a fragment of matter. He comes not from above, but from within, he comes that we might find him in this world of ours.... Joined to the incarnate Son, present in the Eucharist, the whole cosmos gives thanks to God. Indeed the Eucharist is itself an act of cosmic love. (236)

God, who calls us to generous commitment and to give him our all, offers us the light and the strength needed to continue on our way. In the heart of this world, the Lord of Life, who loves us so much, is always present. He does not abandon us, he does not leave us alone, for he has united himself definitively to our earth, and his love constantly impels us to find new ways forward. *Praise be to him!* (245)

Related Prayers of the Faithful

Option 1: That, knowing that God is not stranger to our pain and struggle, we have the courage to go beyond ourselves in the service of God, others, and the earth, we pray to the Lord...

Option 2: That, knowing that Jesus loves and forgives us even as we fail, we renew our commitment to God's work of renewing the earth, we pray to the Lord...

Further Resources

Feedback: info@catholicclimatecovenant.org

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