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 4th Sunday of Advent, Cycle A (December 21, 2025)

Homily Helps

† **Scripture Passages to Note:**

Isaiah 7: Ask for a sign from the Lord, your God.

Psalm 24: The Lord's are the earth and its fullness.

Romans 1: A servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an Apostle.

Matthew 1: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel.

† **Comments for the Day:**

Today's readings invite us to welcome **Emmanuel-God with us**. Isaiah foretells a child born of a virgin, a sign of God's unshakable faithfulness. Psalm 24 calls us to prepare our hearts with purity and openness as we await the King of Glory, to whom the earth belongs. Paul reminds us that Jesus fulfills God's ancient promises and brings grace to all who believe. In the Gospel, Joseph shows courageous faith, choosing trust over fear as he embraces God's plan for Mary and for the world. As Christmas approaches, we are called to make room for Christ, clearing away fear, doubt, and distraction - so that the Lord may enter our lives with hope and peace.

In Isaiah's time, King Ahaz wanted to align himself with Assyria in order to ensure protection for his people. Isaiah was against this move, insisting that God would protect them. He told Ahaz that a sign from God would confirm this. A young woman (or *virgin*, from the Hebrew word *almah*) would bear a son who would be called *Immanu el*, or "*God is with us*." Since the people believed that God was with the king in a special way, the reference is probably to Ahaz's son. Thus, Ahaz was told that the child his young wife is carrying would be a son who would be a sign of God's protection. Furthermore, since kings were usually anointed, this child like every king before him will be considered an anointed one, translated *messiah*.

The promise made to Ahaz is fulfilled in Jesus as today's gospel reading announces. Jesus is "God with us," the long-awaited Davidic messiah, the savior of his people as his Jewish name *Yeshuah* ("*one who saves*") indicates. His realm is not limited to one kingdom as was Ahaz's, nor to one people, as the Israelites thought. His realm embraces all creation; this universality, and his saving power, is outlined in the responsorial psalm. Christ is Lord over the entire earth: the whole world and those who are a part of it – and even beyond.

All the more reason why we, as followers of Christ, are called to recognize the intrinsic value of creation and uphold our duty to care for earth, our common home.

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

God's love is the fundamental moving force in all created things…Every creature is thus the object of the Father's tenderness, who gives it its place in the world. Even the fleeting life of the least of beings is the object of his love, and in its few seconds of existence, God enfolds it with his affection. (77)

In the Christian understanding of the world, the destiny of all creation is bound up with the mystery of Christ, present from the beginning: "All things have been created through him and for him" (*Col* 1:16). (99)

We take [ecosystems] into account not only to determine how best to use them, but also because they have an intrinsic value independent of their usefulness. Each organism, as a creature of God, is good and admirable in itself; the same is true of the harmonious ensemble of organisms existing in a defined space and functioning as a system. Although we are often not aware of it, we depend on these larger systems for our own existence. (140)

Related Prayers of the Faithful

Option 1: That we might be open to new ways of understanding the implications of Jesus' reign over all of creation, and also our duty to care for it, in let us pray to the Lord …

Option 2: That we will come to see that earth and all its fullness belongs to Christ and not to us, let us pray to the Lord …

Further Resources

Feedback: info@catholicclimatecovenant.org

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

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