

Integral Faith

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



Homily Helps and Petitions for the 20th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Cycle A (August 16, 2026)

Homily Helps

† Scripture Passages to Note:

Isaiah 56: Thus says the Lord: Observe what is right, do what is just; for my salvation is about to come, my justice, about to be revealed.

Romans 11: For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable.

Matthew 15: And behold, a Canaanite woman of that district came and called out, "Have pity on me, Lord, Son of David! My daughter is tormented by a demon." Then Jesus said to her in reply, "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And the woman's daughter was healed from that hour.

† Comments for the Day:

Jesus intentionally breaks boundaries. He leaves the familiar, predictable borders of Jewish territory and enters the geographic and spiritual space of the ultimate outsider: a Canaanite woman. The woman's faith and trust in Jesus is indicated by the way she addresses him, "Lord, Son of David!" coupled with her plea for his compassion.

Jesus marvels at her fierce, unflinching, and persistent faith which prompts the expansion of the map of the Reign of God on the spot. Healing breaks through borders and cultural barriers right there in Gentile territory.

Like the Canaanite woman, we are called to go out of ourselves, to break down barriers and wrestle with God, hanging on to his promises, seeking healing, wholeness and peace. True prayer, like that of the distraught mother in this Gospel passage, is not about getting quick answers or treating God like a vending machine.

As with prayer, so readily do we turn our churches, communities, and hearts into exclusive "sacred spaces" meant only for people who look, think, or act like us. Today's Gospel reminds us that God's mercy cannot be fenced in. If our sacred space is too small to welcome the outsider, the desperate, or the different, then it is too small for Jesus.

Everything is interconnected. We grow more, mature more, become more like God to the extent that we go out of ourselves to enter into relationships, to promote communion, with God, with others, with ourselves and with nature. When any of these four levels of relationship are neglected, all our relationships become skewed or imbalanced.

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's Gospel message offers us an occasion to look at our own attitudes toward people of other races, ethnic groups and nationalities, not to mention the socially disadvantaged or physically or mentally disabled—in other words, any people who are 'different'.

How inclusive are we in word and action? Does our parish community go out of its way to provide a welcome for the 'outsider'? As Pope Leo reminds us: how we receive migrants is the litmus test of our faith.

† **Passages from *Magnifica Humanitatis* to Note:**

We are called to reflect on the great “construction sites” of our era and ask: What are we building? As technological development rapidly transforms languages, relationships, institutions and forms of power, we believers must and can choose which projects to work on and in what manner, so as to safeguard and value the grandeur of humanity that has been given to us as a gift. This is a choice not only for our future but also for our present. (90)

The creative intelligence of humanity is a gift that can alleviate suffering and open up new possibilities, but it must remain ordered toward the common good, justice, the care of the vulnerable and creation. In this sense, the true alternative is not between enthusiasm and fear, but between two paths of development: a progress that serves individuals and peoples, or a progress that subjects them to the mentality of power. (129)

If, however, power grows while the heart withers and human bonds fray, then we are faced with a new form of Babel — a construction that is grandiose, yet fundamentally dehumanizing. (129)

Questioning this alternative path of progress and how we interpret and live it is ultimately a matter of examining our own hearts. The way we understand and shape relationships, work and institutions, in practice reveals our fundamental values. In the end, it all stems from what we hold most dear. This is a love that guides us as to what we truly cherish, both as individuals and as a society, and directs our lives and actions. The age of AI is no exception: the construction of Babel or the rebuilding of Jerusalem begins within each one of us. (130)

Related Prayers of the Faithful

Option 1: That we might have open hearts which readily welcome those in need, let us pray to the Lord ...

Option 2: That we might have an open heart that trusts in the limitless abundance of God's table, where there is always room, and always enough, let us pray to the Lord

Further Resources

Feedback: info@catholicclimatecovenant.org

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

Visit our webpage and sign up to receive these resources delivered to your email inbox each month.