

27th Sunday in Ordinary Time, 3 October 2021

Feast of St. Francis of Assisi

Scriptures: Genesis 2:18-24; Hebrews 2:9-11; Mark 10:2-16

Homily: Fr. Ken

This weekend we are celebrating the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron of the City and the Archdiocese of San Francisco.

St. Francis is perhaps the best known and most loved among all the saints, and not just by Catholics, but by people of many different religious faiths.

Most everyone knows the story of his life, from a vast multitude of scholarly as well as popular books and articles, as well as motion pictures including Franco Zeffirelli's 1972 film, "Brother Son, Sister Moon", with music and lyrics by Donovan.

The relevance of the life of St. Francis for our world is just as significant for us today as it was 800 years ago.

Aside from being the patron saint of the poor and the homeless, and of peace and justice, St. Francis is also the patron of the environment and all creation.

Today, our Pope Francis—the first pope ever to take the name Francis—has from day one as pope, emphasized the radical importance of protecting our God-given environment, which he has said "all too often, instead of using for the good, we exploit greedily, to one another's detriment".

Pope Francis went on to say that there is a risk in considering ourselves to be "the masters of creation". Creation is not some possession that we can dominate for our own pleasure, nor, even less, is it the property of only some people, the few. "Creation is a gift", he says, "it is the marvelous gift that God has given us so

that we will take care of it for the benefit of all, always with great respect and gratitude". This is all discussed at length in his amazing encyclical, *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*.

Today, of course, the greatest threat to God's creation is climate change, referred to more strictly as global warming. It is not only a socio-political economic issue, but it is a moral issue of the highest priority.

In the encyclical, Pope Francis affirms what scientists have been saying for years, namely that human activity is the principal cause of climate change, and that "human inaction in the face of such a problem carries great risks and socio-economic costs".

It is out of love for our children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren, for our home the Earth, and for all of God's creation, that we must take very seriously, as Pope Francis does, the very challenge of climate change.

At the conclusion of his encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis offers us the following prayer:

A prayer for our earth

All powerful God,
you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.
Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.
Fill us with peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned
and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes.

Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty,
not pollution and destruction.

Touch the hearts
of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognize that we are profoundly united
with every creature
as we journey toward your infinite light.

We thank you for being with us each day.
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle
for justice, love, and peace

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