

Homily
Green Mass - October 3, 2021
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In Genesis' **first** chapter we are reminded: "**God looked at everything he had made, and he found it very good.**" And then ... of course ... in the **second** chapter ... Genesis tells us ... that after just a few ... easy to understand ... easy to follow ... instructions ... God turned the good things **He** had made ... over to humankind. ... In what He intended to be a **symbiotic** relationship ... God entrusted to us the care of the earth and all His creatures ... and ... in turn ... the earth to care for us. Sadly ... sister earth has done a **much** better job of caring for us than we have done caring for her.

In the very beginning of his encyclical "**LAUDATO SI**" Pope Francis recalls that his namesake ... St. Francis of Assisi ... in his beautiful "**Canticle of Creation**" reminds us that our earth is like "**a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us.**" But ... Pope Francis continues: "**This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will.**"

This harm, the Holy Father reminds us "**is reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life.**" He declares that "the earth herself is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor." He recalls Pope Paul VI' warning **fifty years ago** that: "Due to an ill-considered exploitation of nature, humanity runs the risk of destroying it and becoming in turn a victim of this degradation". Pope Paul had warned then ... of an "ecological catastrophe under the effective explosion of industrial civilization", and stressed "the urgent need for a radical change in the conduct of humanity", Sadly these warning went **unheeded.**

If that were not enough ... Seventy-six years ago ... humankind perfected an ultra-destructive weapon ... a weapon that is now in the hands of so **many** nations ... in such **quantities** ... as to **destroy** our earth many times over. The only thing preventing this is fear. One wonders how long it will be before that will no **longer** ... be enough.

And our lack of responsible stewardship continues with no appreciable signs of improving. To paraphrase Pope Francis ... It is time for us to act like the stewards of creation that God intended us to be. In this our annual **Green Mass** let us take the time to reflect on our own lifestyles and ask ourselves, **prayerfully**, how our own “daily decisions about food, consumption, transportation, use of water, energy and many other material goods, can often be thoughtless and harmful” ... and what can we do to change them. And if we **do** not ... **when** our Lord call us to account ... as He certainly will ... what then will be our response?

And, of course, our care of the earth is not the **only** of God’s gifts that humankind has abused. As we heard in the Gospel ... referring to God’s gift to a man and a woman and indeed to humankind itself. He gives them to each other just as they give themselves to each other and mutually give themselves to Him. This is the holy and sacred marriage covenant ... husband ... wife ... and God. In our Lord’s own words: **“what God has joined together, no human being must separate.”** Yet in our modern culture it seems that marriage vows are not until **death** do we part ... but until it is no longer **convenient**.

And our modern culture also treats with contempt God’s gift to us of making us partners with Him in procreation. Our Lord commands us to **“Let the children come to me; do not prevent them ... ”**. But preventing them is so easy? And sometimes they can be so inconvenient. Thanks God ... but no thanks! For this too ... there will be an accounting and what **will** be our response?