



ON CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME

LAUDATO SI'

“Praise be to you, my Lord.”

This series of bulletin inserts will focus on the SUNDAY SCRIPTURES in light of LAUDATO SI'

A central theme of the scripture readings for this Sunday is hospitality. In the Book of Kings, a woman and her husband offer the prophet Elisha shelter and a meal, allowing him to rest and regain strength for his journey. In return, the man of God promises the childless woman that within a year, she will be fondling a baby son.

Hospitality is the ability to make room for the other in one's world. It is about taking notice of the needs of the other and responding with compassion and solidarity. Hospitality is gratuitous. A person offering hospitality does so without asking for anything in return. Nonetheless, in the Scriptures God repeatedly rewards hospitality with divine blessing, also freely given. The Scriptures present us with a compelling model of gratuitous exchange, and in this exchange God's generosity stands out.

This day's first reading invites us to connect the ancient tale of Elisha with our own stories of human hospitality and divine blessings. Indeed, it prompts us to recall that in many cases our own forebears from Europe, Latin America, Asia, or other parts of the globe were offered hospitality in the United States and, subsequently, they and their children experienced the blessings of a new life. Now it is our turn to take notice of the needs of the new immigrants and refugees who are fleeing crushing poverty, violence, drought and other environmental disasters exacerbated by climate change. These and other signs of the times challenge us to further extend our hospitality even to other creatures, to ecosystems, and to the Earth itself. As pilgrims in the journey of faith, do we acknowledge that we share a common pilgrimage to God with all creation?

Pope Francis raises such questions in his encyclical *Laudato Si'*. While in the past we Catholics have sometimes viewed such concerns for all creation as foreign to our tradition, in fact, when we better inform ourselves, we realize that care of the earth and the creatures that sustain us has deep scriptural roots. The people of Israel were urged to attend to the cry of the poor and the pleas of the land. The traditions of the Sabbath and the Jubilee year provided rest and restoration, and this paved the way for the divine blessing of new life and salvation for all.

In his letter to the Romans, St. Paul challenges the Christian community to remember, notice, and act in accord with who they are in Christ – including the social implications of being Christian – so that they might receive the divine blessing of new life.

In the Gospel of this Sunday, Jesus makes use of startling – even hyperbolic – imagery to challenge the social conventions of his day. As we reflect on this passage, we realize that Jesus is challenging his listeners to not to confine their identity and allegiance to the arena of traditional family ties, but rather to express their identity as his followers in support of the radical project of individual and social transformation based on love, radical hospitality, and restorative justice that he came to initiate.

† **Scripture passages to note:**

2 Kings 4: Elisha promised, "This time next year you will be fondling a baby son."

Romans 6: We were indeed buried with him (Christ) through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life.

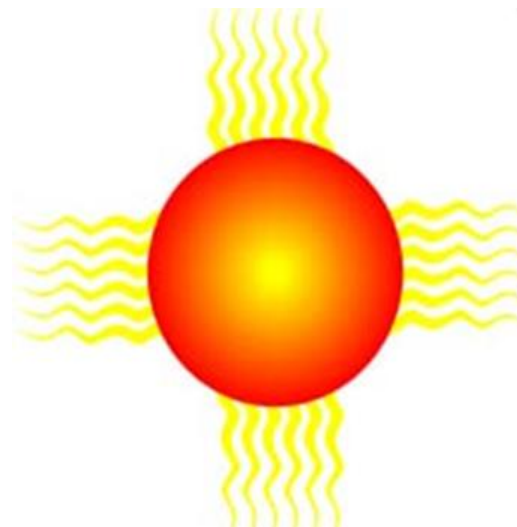
Matthew 10: "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me..."

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

God gave humanity the chance of a new beginning. All it takes is one good person to restore hope! The biblical tradition clearly shows that this renewal entails recovering and respecting the rhythms inscribed in nature by the hand of the Creator. We see this, for example, in the law of the Sabbath. On the seventh day, God rested from all his work. He commanded Israel to set aside each seventh day as a day of rest, a Sabbath....Similarly, every seven years, a sabbatical year was set aside for Israel, a complete rest for the land when sowing was forbidden and one reaped only what was necessary to live on and to feed one's household. ... This law came about as an attempt to ensure balance and fairness in their relationships with others and with the land on which they lived and worked. (#71)

The God who created the universe out of nothing can also intervene in this world and overcome every form of evil. Injustice is not invincible. (#74)

A spirituality which forgets God as all-powerful and Creator is not acceptable. That is how we end up worshipping earthly powers, or ourselves usurping the place of God, even to the point of claiming an unlimited right to trample his creation underfoot. (#75)



This resource is provided by the Integral Faith Team in collaboration with the [Catholic Climate Covenant](#), the [Global Catholic Climate Movement](#), the [Association of U.S. Catholic Priests](#), and the [Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center](#)

FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO blessedtrinitymissoula.org (Click on the LAUDATO SI page). The complete text of the encyclical is available there, as well as other information and videos.