



DEPARTMENT OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL ACTION

WEEK 3 OF SEASON OF CREATION

THEME: SAVING ENERGY -
WASTEFUL USE OF ENERGY DESTROYS CREATION

SUNDAY – 19TH SEPTEMBER – SATURDAY 25TH SEPTEMBER

PLEASE NOTE: THIS IS ONE REFLECTION FOR THE WHOLE WEEK

1. What the Word of God says: Sunday 19th September – 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year B

First Reading: Wisdom 21:12,17-20

Second Reading: James 3:16-4:3

Gospel: Mark 9:30-37

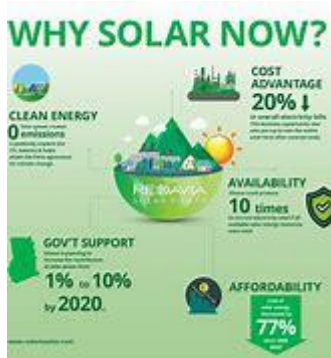


2. What Laudato Si' says:

Pope Francis opens his 2015 encyclical *Laudato Si'* with facts about how we have harmed the earth and each other before sharing how the Catholic faith brings hope and motivation to address environmental issues. In the first chapter, "What is happening to our common home?" he begins with pollution and climate change. He sees these problems as "closely linked to a throwaway culture." (*Laudato Si'* #22)

As one example of the "throwaway culture," fossil fuels are a single-use energy source that spews harmful pollution and endangers people's health. Pope Francis writes "There is an urgent need to develop policies so that, in the next few years, the emission of carbon dioxide and other highly polluting gases can be drastically reduced, for example, substituting for fossil fuels and developing sources of renewable energy. Worldwide there is minimal access to clean and renewable energy." (*Laudato Si'* #26)

3. Reflection for This Week:



As Christians we are called to live in peace and harmony with one another, and with all creation.

However, we are not immune to self-seeking attitudes, and we give little care to the environment.

We ask the Lord today, to convert our attitude towards nature, to make us love the beautiful universe that He has created for us.

In the first reading, we hear how the godless persecute the virtuous person because his blameless life is a reproach to them. The virtuous are those who hold on to their faith in God and obey His commandments. (Wisdom 2:12, 17-20)

In the second reading, James contrasts the wisdom of the ungodly with the wisdom that comes from God. The former gives rise to rivalry, disharmony and fighting. The latter leads to gentleness, compassion and peace. (James 3:16-4:3)

In the Gospel, Jesus tells his apostles that he will suffer bitter humiliation and death, and says that true greatness shows itself in service towards the weaker members of the community. (Mark 9:30-37)

The reading from James is particularly relevant. We need to read James through the lens of the other famous line in his letter, namely that our actions show the level of our faith. In other words that others will know we have faith because we act in ways that continue Jesus' tradition of

'bringing life in its fullness' to everyone. Our faith is witnessed by our actions, in the campaigns we support, in the policies we advocate for and in the solidarity we build with those on the margins.

Three reflections flow from this letter. **Note the last verse.**

1. We do not receive because we do not pray properly.

James is not referring to formulae in prayer but to praying in ways that hold the best interests of others at heart. Praying selfishly, foregrounding our personal greed and seeking success in ways that exploit others will not meet God's favour. We need to think of this practically. Prayer is never an abstract exercise, it is embedded in the world in which we live, the people who inhabit the earth with us and the eco-systems that sustain us. These issues need to be part of our prayer.



2. Justice is the measure by which we build a culture of peace.

James is clear, and he inherits this from the prophetic tradition, that justice is the measure by which we build a culture of peace. We recall Pope Paul VI's words to the United Nations; 'If you want peace work for justice.' James is clear that when he speaks so eloquently about peace, that as long as injustice and greed and the disrespect for the needs of others is paramount, we will always have conflict, live with a deep suspicion of each other and stand on the brink of war.

3. James points out the danger of normalising 'vile practices.'

In our era as we read the signs of the times, we see clear examples of vile practices.

These include:

- the destruction of the environment,
- the marginalisation of people especially the poor.

The choices we make contribute directly to these vile practices.

How we procure our energy, which sources we choose and whose interest we serve in making these choices, either helps or hinders the growth of vile practices.

It offers each of us a choice, where do we stand and what do these actions say about our faith?

4. Prayer for This Week:

God inspire those who govern our country and the countries of the world, to make policy choices that contribute to the healing of our planet, to ensuring that each person is treated with dignity and that energy is used for the full flourishing of all humanity.

Help us to be accountable in the way we use the resources of the earth, so that we use them justly ensuring that everyone has access to what they need and none abuses what they have to the detriment of others.

Our heavenly Father, create in us a pure heart and a steadfast mind, so that we will cease the pursuit of personal wealth and power, and will use the resources we have to provide for those who have none.

God of love and mercy, fill our hearts with your divine love. Give us the grace to love our brothers and sisters, to love and nourish our environment, to protect all the creatures from any harm. Cleanse our hearts of selfishness, and give us a spirit of loving service, so that we may live in peace and unity, in harmony with creation so that your kingdom may be realised here on earth. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

5. Action for This Week:

- Use LED bulbs, unplug electronic devices when not in use
- Electricity: power cuts are path of life. Even so, turning off lights when not needed, especially at night.
- Use energy efficient appliances, solar panels
- Turn off lights and electrical equipment when not needed.
- Use low energy light bulbs (CFLs).
- Unplug phone charger when not in use. If it remains plugged in, it will use 20% energy.
- Buy local food; it cuts down on transport costs and packing, and helps local business.
- Avoid unnecessary journeys; share journeys.
- Walk for short journeys, carpool, use alternative transport, maintain your vehicle, combine trips.
- Never throw rubbish on the road or in a public place. Keep a rubbish bag in your car for disposal at home.
- Avoid using disposable cups/plates, plastic water bottles, nappies, etc.
- Avoid cutting down trees. Plant trees; they are the lungs, oxygen of the earth; provide shelter for human, bird and animal life; attract clouds and rain. Fallen leaves nourish the soil.
- The use of wind power and solar power;
- The use of electric motor vehicles.
- Reuse, Reduce, Recycle
- Write letters to MPs asking them about their parties policies on energy and especially on providing energy for the poor.
- With James talking of building peace, we should also refrain from buying children toys that glorify war, such as guns.

