



Homily Helps for August 28, 2022

Catholics United to Protect and Support Women, Children, and Families

Homily Theme: We are called to serve God by serving the poor in our midst. This year, the twelve dioceses of California are joining together to support women, children, and families in need. Here in San Francisco, we are highlighting and inviting support for the work of the Gabriel Project as a concrete way to care for them.

Readings:

1st Reading: **Sirach 3:17-18, 20, 28-29** – Conduct your affairs with humility and find favor with God.

Psalm 68 – “God, in your goodness, you have made a home for the poor.”

2nd Reading: **Hebrews 12:18-19, 22-24a** – We are the assembly of the firstborn enrolled in heaven! With confidence we seek the city of the living God, made perfect through the blood of the New Covenant.

Gospel: **Luke 14:1,7-14** – “When you hold a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind; blessed indeed will you be because of their inability to repay you.”

Homily Talking Points:

[Note to homilists: the content below is offered as a starting point for your own reflection and preparation. You might want to use the bracketed subtitles as an outline, and the more detailed reflections may help to make connections to the scripture readings of the day.

- **[Call to be humble.]** In today’s Gospel, Jesus tells a parable that emphasizes the call to be humble, not to presume upon our own lofty status. It’s hard not to notice a certain tension with the second reading, where Saint Paul reminds us of our great dignity as the firstborn enrolled in heaven, being made perfect through the blood of Christ. We are indeed being exalted by God!
- **[God takes care of the poor—by our hands!]** The resolution of this tension is found in Jesus’ command at the end of the Gospel, which fulfills the prophetic vision of the Psalm: “God, in your goodness, you have made a home for the poor.”
 - God truly does take care of the poor—by our hands! As the Body of Christ on earth, we are being made perfect whenever we invite the poor, the lame, the suffering and the excluded to share in the spiritual and material blessings we have received.

- We don't have to look very far to find people who are struggling and suffering. In fact, nearly everyone suffers from want at different times in life, especially in today's world.
- In that light, **the bishops of California have made a commitment this year to support women, children and families in need... and we all have a role to play.** This is what we do, because this is who we are as the firstborn children of God—in Baptism we were redeemed by Christ and born unto eternal life: we were born ready to help those in need!
- **[Call to unite in support of pregnant women.]** These days, most of us have noticed that the overturning of Roe v. Wade has generated a lot of sensationalized reactions across our state. The political camps and media interests are doing everything possible to divide, anger, and scare us into supporting their agendas. On the other hand, the Gospel calls us to respond to this new landscape with a spirit of unity and loving kindness. What does that mean for us as Catholics?
 - Whether we are Democrats, Republicans, or independents, we can all agree that an unexpected pregnancy can be disorienting and frightening. This was true for our Mother Mary and Saint Joseph when an angel appeared to each of them with a simple message: “Do not be afraid!” – for nothing is impossible with God. That is the uniting message we are called to share!
 - We can also agree that no woman facing an unexpected or difficult pregnancy should ever be left to feel that abortion is her only choice, due to economic circumstances or social pressure. Our society does not always give vulnerable women the support they need to choose life, and that is where we come in. Our message to them is: “Support Changes Everything!”
- **[Let's give women options for pregnancy – through the Gabriel Project]** We all know of the great work that Catholic Charities, St. Vincent de Paul, the Knights of Columbus, Pregnancy Resource Centers, and other ministries of our Church do to help the needy and vulnerable. Today I would like to introduce a specific way **we can all help fulfill our bishops' commitment to women, children, and families in need.** In fact, Archbishop Cordileone is asking us all to prayerfully consider supporting the Gabriel Project.
 - I cannot emphasize enough how important this ministry is for our Catholic mission of compassionate care and support for women in need. These women truly have no means to repay our generosity, and countless thousands do not yet know that help is just a phone call away.
 - In today's Gospel, our Lord promises that we will be blessed in ways that cannot be measured when we share from our bounty with them. So please visit the website at sfarchdiocese.org/gabrielproject, and look for the announcement in today's bulletin for more info.
- **[Homilists are encouraged to reach out to a local Gabriel Project to find out if there is a specific example of someone who has recently been helped by the project, whose story could give witness to the value of embracing life even in very trying or adverse circumstances. Share the story and make the connection—supporting the Gabriel Project will allow many more people to find out about those services and find the courage to make a life-affirming choice.]**
- **[Looking ahead – Prop 1 and Respect Life month.]** I know it is unusual for me to make an appeal on behalf of an outside organization in the homily. It is also an unusual year for us—a year in which our resolve as Catholics to care for all human life is being tested in dramatic ways.
 - After the overturning of Roe v. Wade, the constitutional expansion of abortion in our state will be on the ballot this year. The Archdiocese of San Francisco and the California

Catholic Conference have created web pages about Proposition 1. I want to encourage everyone to look up the websites listed in our bulletin announcement, get informed, pray about it, form your conscience, and discuss it with friends... and please make sure you are registered to vote!

- Also, our parish will be doing more service and fundraising activities during Respect Life month in October, so please keep an eye out for those activities and pray about how you may want to get involved.
- **[Closing remarks.]** Together and with God's help, we will take steps to ensure that all women in California have equitable support to choose life without coercion or fear.