

Twenty Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time Year C – 2nd October 2022

Notes to Assist in Preparing the Homily by Bishop Martin Hayes

(Day for Life & Season of Creation 5 - Luke 17:5-10)

In *Laudato Si'* - On Care for Our Common Home, Pope Francis calls our attention to "the three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbours and with the earth itself" (LS 66). A constant theme throughout, *Laudato Si'* is the interconnection between all of life (notably, LS 70 and LS 138). Indeed, Pope Francis, states that the connection between God and all beings is intimate and that our encounters with the beauty of creation lead to mystical experiences that reveal God to us (LS 233/4).

It is appropriate that on this Day for Life, as we raise awareness on the dignity of human life, that we situate it within the context of care for all of life. Our particular focus on the Day for Life this year is '*Caring for the Older Person*'. It is our opportunity to raise awareness upon the provision of adequate care for our older people in settings that foster their ongoing inclusion and an appreciation of their place in the life of our communities. Pope Francis speaking to this theme of Care for the Elderly for the Day for Life states, "*A greater awareness of the essential contribution the elderly make to the well-being of every society will help counter the throwaway culture*"¹

Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'* makes it clear that our preoccupation with progress based solely upon technology and productivity is futile (LS 78). It can lead to the elderly being regarded as dispensable and deem them victims of our throwaway culture. In celebrating our Day for Life this year, we give thanks for how the elderly have nurtured life in the past and for how they continue to be a source of wisdom for us today. Today, we give thanks for the contribution of our elderly to the well-being of our society. Our Gospel of today highlights the value of service as expressed in the concluding verse, "*we are merely servants: we have done no more than our duty*". Our older generation have contributed and have been of service to our society.

Further, in appreciation of our elderly, we must create opportunities for intergenerational dialogue which will have the beneficial effect of reducing the isolation of our older generations. We have much to learn from our older people who are of a rhythm of life that was not as preoccupied with the frenzy of progress. In entering their rhythm of life, we can be guided on how to live in an appropriate relationship with God, with each other, and with the earth itself. In listening to our older people, we can come to appreciate them as 'living signs of the goodness of God who bestows life in abundance'².

¹ Pope Francis, General Audience, 23 May 2022

² *ibid*