

Homily 11th Sunday of year B 2021

The Theologian, James Mackey, tells the story of a man who went on a hunting expedition in Africa. Camping in a jungle he left camp early one morning, hiked a few miles into the bush by himself, and shot two wild turkeys. Buckling these to his belt, he was walking back towards camp when he heard noises and realized he was being followed. Frightened, he tightened his grip on his rifle, scanning the woods for movement. His fear was quickly dispelled. He saw a young boy, about twelve years old, naked and hungry stalking him. He realized instantly that the boy wanted food. He stopped, opened his belt, let the turkeys fall to the ground, and backed away. The young boy ran up to the turkeys, but didn't pick them up. Instead, he looked towards the man and began asking him for something. Not understanding what the boy said, but sensing that he wanted permission to take the birds, the man began gesturing to him that it was okay. But the boy was still not at ease. He kept asking and gesturing for something. Finally, in desperation, the boy took several steps back from the turkeys and stood silently with his hands out, open in front of him — waiting until the man came and placed the turkeys into his hands. Then he ran off into the jungle. Despite his hunger and need, he had refused to take the birds, waiting until they were given to him. The boy accepted that life had to be given him; he could not take it, all on his own, no matter how desperate he was.

Our readings all speak of life and show that one of the best teachers about life is found in nature: seeds, trees, shrubs, soil, crops, mountains. The great lesson is the interdependency necessary for life to flourish. God gives each of us life through our parents. One of the greatest lessons of the pandemic is the recognition of the life we give to each other. Many were isolated from their loved ones and felt cut off from life. Today the life of creation is utterly dependent on us living more simply, making sacrifices, being less wasteful. Creation stands before us with open hands. Shamefully, we have taken life from it (6th Commandment). We are duty bound to give back life.

Nature and people need water to survive. We receive life through the waters of baptism which opens up all sorts of gifts and abilities lying dormant within us. Like the boy in the story, we come to God with open hands and receive the fulness of life, Jesus Christ.

A chap enters a grocers.

He sees a pile of potatoes, and asks the shop keeper:

"What are those?"

"Those are potatoes"

"Can I have a kilo of potatoes individually wrapped?"

The store keeper shakes his head and start wrapping potatoes.

"What are those?"

"Those are plums..."

"Can I have a kilogram of plums all individually wrapped?"

The store keeper, even more frustrated, starts wrapping the plums.

"... and what are those?!"

"Those are poppy seeds and they are **NOT** for sale!"