



Franciscan Action Network

Transforming the World in the Spirit of St. Francis and St. Clare

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Easter for the Earth: God's Dwelling

WORDS from Revelation...for Creation

Christ is *still* risen! Alleluia!

As we continue to celebrate the meaning of Christ's Resurrection, the next two Sundays offer us a vision of the new creation God establishes for us in Christ. On April 25, we hear of John's "vision of a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation, race, people, and tongue" (Rev. 7:9). This multitude "will not hunger or thirst anymore, nor will the sun or any heat strike them. For the Lamb who is in the center of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to springs of life-giving water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes" (7:15).

We hear John repeat God's promise to "wipe every tear from their eyes" in on May 2, when he recounts a vision of "a new heaven and a new earth" (Rev. 21:1). A loud voice from the throne announces that "God's dwelling is with the human race" and that "there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, (for) the old order has passed away" (21:3, 4). God proclaims from the throne, "Behold, I make all things new" (21: 5).

These readings have an ageless appeal and relevance. As the global community turns its attention to Earth Day (April 22), we add Franciscan voices to the conversation about how we can best care for God's creation, turning from an old order of antagonism and dishonesty to a new creation of kinship and reconciliation. "God's dwelling is with the human race": how are we caring for the home that God has given us and made God's own?

WORDS of Revelation...from Creation

Sr. Eleanor Goekler, SMIC (Long Branch, NJ) offers a thought-provoking reflection and poem on our need for a "change in climate" in response to climate change:

CLIMATE CHANGE ↔ CHANGE OF CLIMATE

Is this just a play on words or is the change of climate needed in today's world – a present climate of confrontation, of misrepresentation, of refusing to do more than accepting that all truth is found in headlines, of non-listening, of needing to be right – a major part of how truly owning and acting on slowing climate change will take place?

WHAT on *earth* – and in the heavens – does our Franciscan way of being have to say to the reality of Climate Change? ONLY our core value of conversion, inviting us always to live more deeply into the Mystery of being Brother/Sister to all creation and thereby accepting the Truth of our harmful – and yes – our helpful actions; daily allowing ourselves to be changed deep within, so that standing before the world we effect both Climate Change AND Change of Climate.

Conversion through
Listening to the voices of all creation
Integrating each to reach the
Mystery of being One
Acting on our belief in the
Thisness of each creature
Entering into this Truth

Challenging confrontation by
How we live being Sister/Brother
Allowing
Nothing to prevent our carrying the cross contained in this Mystery
Grounded by grace
Eyes opening to the Resurrected One present in All, in Whom all is present

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Sarah Anderson, SFO (Plattsburg, NY) explains how the challenge of accessing safe water has made her aware of the interconnectedness of all creation:

I am a member of the SFO Sacred Heart Fraternity in Plattsburgh, NY. I buy gallons of bottled water each week because the home I purchased eight years ago came with a private well which, I was told, could be easily cleaned with bleaching. This proved to be false...my well consistently tests positive for coliform, though not e-coli. And...an expert in private wells said that he will not drill in our area for new wells without warning folks that the groundwater for seven miles along Lake Champlain is contaminated...most likely from agribusiness ventures. Indeed, my little home sits at the bottom of vast, sloping corn fields which are planted to support one of the world's largest poultry farms located two miles from my home.

Researching other ways to provide water for my family came up with the necessity to invest \$6,000-\$10,000 for the equipment due to the high concentration of sulfur and other minerals found naturally in the groundwater in this area. I do not have this money and cannot go into debt to get it since I have been unable to find permanent work since a layoff. So...this is also a plea for more information as to how clean a well without incurring massive debt.

Do you have suggestions for Sarah? Contact us at creation@franciscanaction.org to share your ideas.

Now...what this has done for me personally is to make me very conscious of this. At mealtime, I often pray for everyone connected to the food industry in any way...farmers, workers in the field, harvesters, production workers of machinery, production workers of plastic wrapping, transportation workers, grocery folks...on and on goes the list, with a plea for the Holy Spirit to inform all of us as to wiser stewardship of His dear planet so that the earth, the animals, and other humans are treated with the dignity He has in mind for each.

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Stephen DeWitt, OFM (Silver Spring, MD) shares his thoughts on climate change as “the fundamental moral issue of our time”:

Creation is a gift from God and it is meant to be used in a way that respects its status as such, not abused to make our lives easier. The way in which we currently treat our planet is an affront to God and deeply sinful. We have abandoned the careful stewardship that we are to exercise in the Bible because of our world’s deep addiction to fossil fuels. This addiction is killing our planet and it will kill us if we do not change. Our behavior is also a profound denial of God’s creation. By treating creation so shamefully, we tell God that God’s work, that God’s self, is not worthy of respect. Most religious people refuse to curse God; they rightly react strongly against even the idea. Yet we do the same thing with our actions every time we refuse to address the damage our energy consumption does to the planet.

Read more from Steve’s blog: <http://afranciscanabroad.com/2010/04/05/climate-change-is-a-moral-imperative/>

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Franciscan Sisters of Our Lady of Perpetual Help (St. Louis, MO) describe how they incorporated care for creation into their observance of Holy Week this year:

Twenty three Sisters gathered at their offices in St. Louis, Missouri on Monday evening of Holy Week for a viewing of the film “*Earth and the American Dream*”. The film vividly portrays the cost that Earth has borne over five centuries for those in pursuit of the American dream. As we were in the midst of Holy Week reflection on the Passion of Jesus, coming face to face with the Passion of Earth through this film helped us make real, felt connections between Creator and Creation.

We continued our reflection on Wednesday of Holy Week with this theme as part of our weekly “Mindful Wednesdays” message sent out to all our Sisters. (You can read the message on the FAN website at www.franciscanaction.org/easter_and_earth_2010.)