

Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation News

Congregation of the Sisters of Bon Secours



Ecological Conversion

November, 2017

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All Christians need an 'ecological conversion', whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them. (Pope Francis)

This month we celebrate the birthday of Fr. Thomas Berry, a Passionist priest and self-described "geologian" or Earth scholar. Influenced by the works of Teilhard de Chardin, Fr. Berry stood in awe and wonder at the sacredness of Earth and was a faithful advocate for the environment. During this month as we continue to engage in a process of "ecological conversion", this issue of JPIC News offers some inspiring and challenging words of Fr. Berry, as well as words of others who have been influenced by his writings, for us to ponder. Savor these quotes. Allow them to find a home in you. Notice if and how your worldview is shifting from an anthropocentric to an eco-centric one. May Thomas Berry's words awaken in us a deeper awareness of the world in which we live and how we fit into the larger community of life.

"We come into being in and through Earth. Simply put, we are Earthlings. The Earth is our origin, our nourishment, our educator, our healer, our fulfillment. At its core, even our spirituality is Earth derived. The human and the Earth are totally implicated, each in the other. If there is no spirituality in the Earth, then there is no spirituality in ourselves."

(Thomas Berry, "The Spirituality of Earth," in *The Sacred Universe*, 69).

Reflection

How do these words of Thomas Berry challenge you to think outside the box?

Think of an individual or group who has a strong spirituality of Earth.

Reflect on your own spirituality to nature. In what ways is your spirituality Earth derived?



"In sum, **ecological conversion** means falling in love with Earth as an inherently valuable, living community in which we participate and bending every effort to be creatively faithful to its well-being, in tune with the living God who brought it into being and cherishes It with unconditional love."

—Ask the Beasts, Sister Elizabeth Johnson

Have you fallen in love with Earth...yet?
In what ways are you/our Congregation being "creatively faithful" to tending to Earth's well-being?
What could be a next step?

November
JPIC Days of Remembrance

November 3
St. Martin dePorres
Patron of Race Relations

November 9
Birthday of Rev. Thomas Berry



November 13
St. Frances Xavier Cabrini
Patron of Immigrants

November 19
World Day of the Poor

November 25
International Day for
Elimination of Violence
Against Women

November 29
International Day of Solidarity
with the Palestinian People

“...we will recover our sense of wonder and our sense of the sacred only if we appreciate the universe beyond ourselves as a revelatory experience of that numinous presence whence all things came into being. Indeed, the universe is the primary sacred reality. We become sacred by our participation in this more sublime dimension of the world about us.”

(Thomas Berry, “The Wild and the Sacred,” in *The Great Work*, 49)

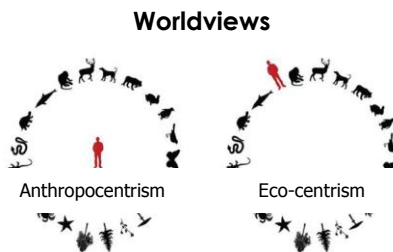


Reflection

Think about the last time you felt truly connected to nature. How do you foster this connection? What might you do to recover your own sense of wonder and sense of the sacred in the natural world?

The Great Work now, as we move into a new millennium, is to carry out the transition from a period of human devastation of Earth to a period when humans would be present to the planet in a mutually beneficial manner.

Thomas Berry, “The Great Work,” in *The Great Work*, 3)



This month notice when and how you are present to Earth in a mutually beneficial manner. Are you becoming more aware from which world view you make choices?

- Some questions to ponder:**
- How does Earth benefit from the type of electricity/heating/air-conditioning I use in my home?
 - How does Earth benefit from my level of consumerism?
 - How does Earth benefit from the amount of meat, particularly beef, that I eat?
 - How does Earth benefit from the cleaning products I use?
 - How does Earth benefit from the amount of water I consume?

“**Ecological conversion** acknowledges the right place of humanity in relationship to God and the natural world, a recognition of how we are situated in that world with a special place in it, not for exploitation, but for cooperation with God.”

--*Seeds of Hope*, Celia Deane-Drummond

“We’re at a moment where there are no guarantees as to the Earth’s future. It’s a question of our own critical choices. And I think what we’re deeply in need of is a transforming vision....A vision that opens the future up to hope.”

--*Fate of the Earth*, Miriam MacGillis OP

What are the critical choices you/our Congregation need to make to guarantee Earth’s future?

Blessed is Earth, it shall flourish with radiant beauty.
 Blessed are the waters
 They will flow with clarity and quench our thirst.
 Blessed are the trees
 They shall absorb toxins and give us breath.
 Blessed are the birds
 They shall soar stately in the sky.
 Blessed is the fire
 It shall melt all walls and separation with the energies of LOVE.
 Blessed are those who live in the universe, are inclusive of all and celebrate the sacredness of the planet.
 They shall experience beauty in all that is revealed.

— James Conlon

Nobel Peace Prize Awarded to ICAN

The work of ICAN (International Coalition to Abolish Nuclear Weapons) was featured in the August JPIC News. On October 6th the **Nobel Peace Prize** was awarded to this organization for its “work to draw attention to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and for its ground-breaking efforts to achieve a treaty-based prohibition of such weapons.”

ICAN, a coalition of non-governmental organizations in 100 countries, said that it was a “great honor” to have been recognized for its role as a driving force behind the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which was adopted on July 7 with the support of 122 nations. The United States, United Kingdom, France, Russia and China -- the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, all of which have nuclear arsenals -- did not participate in the treaty negotiations. In a statement following the Nobel Prize announcement ICAN said, “The specter of nuclear conflict looms large once more. If ever there were a moment for nations to declare their unequivocal opposition to nuclear weapons that moment is now.” <http://www.icanw.org>

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