

# Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation News

## Congregation of the Sisters of Bon Secours



### Ecological Spirituality

July, 2023  
Vol. 8, Number 11



"We lack an awareness of our common origin, of our mutual belonging, and of a future to be shared with everyone. This basic awareness would enable the development of new convictions, attitudes and forms of life."

Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*

This quote by Pope Francis from his encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, offers so much food for reflection! What story describes our common origin? What wisdom shapes our worldview and fosters a deeper sense of our mutual belonging? What new attitudes and convictions does the world need from us at this critical time of life on Earth?

This issue of the JPIC Newsletter will offer excerpts from contemporary spiritual writers and voices of indigenous people, in honor of St. Kateri Tekakwitha, patroness of Ecology and the Environment whose feast we celebrate this month as we continue to develop an ecological spirituality in response to the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform. The Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) of indigenous people, together with Western science combined with faith, hope, and love form the basis of a truly integral ecology that will allow us to develop a mutually enhancing relationship among all people and all beings on our planet. It is from these evolving new perspectives that we can spend our charism of compassion, healing and liberation in new and emerging ways on behalf of the whole Earth community.

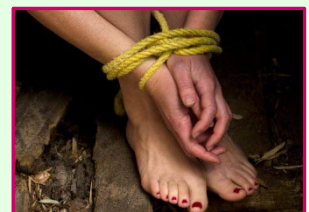
July  
**JPIC Days of Remembrance**

July 14  
**St. Kateri Tekakwitha**  
**Patroness of**  
**Ecology and the Environment**



July 28  
**World Hepatitis Day**

July 30  
**World Day Against**  
**Human Trafficking**

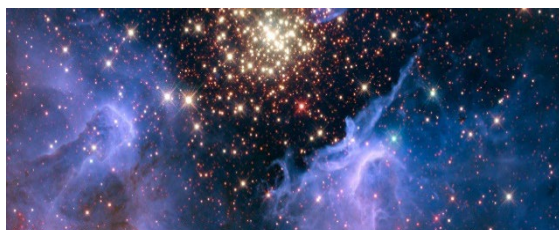


### Our Common Origin – Our Mutual Belonging The Universe Story

"The journey, the sacred journey of the universe, is the personal journey of each individual. The universe is the larger self of each person, since the entire sequence of events that has transpired since the beginning of the universe was required to establish each of us in the precise structure of our own being and in the larger context in which we function."

Thomas Berry, *"Cosmology of Religions"*

"It takes a universe to bring humans into being, a universe to educate humans, a universe to fulfill the human mode of being. More immediately, it takes a solar system and a planet Earth to shape, educate, and fulfill the human." Thomas Berry, *The Sacred Universe*



### Reflection

As you reflect on these quotes, what new perspectives do they offer you?

How do these quotes expand your worldview?

**Sisters of Bon Secours...Women of healing...defending and caring for all creation (Mission Focus)**

"Our times urgently require that we humans develop an ecological sense of ourselves in tune with belief in an ecological God. In light of our common creator we need to expand our sense of identity to include relationship with other creatures, the land, waters and air, all creation itself. Once we have truly appreciated the life of "the other," we arrive at a new starting point for decision-making. Then we can begin to change some of the deep-seated behaviors that are driving environmental destruction as well as our world's galloping poverty, the deity of the market and our cultural despair. Humbled and delighted by the life around us, we can begin to hear the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor and step up to protect our kin."

Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ, "What Does It Mean to Believe in an Ecological God?"



### Consider This...

"Over the last 4 billion years, life on Earth has developed from primordial cells that did not even have a nucleus into Homo Sapiens. The water in your body contains primordial hydrogen formed in the first seconds of the Big Bang. The carbon atoms that form you came together because of the explosion of a supernova. The concentration of salt in your body matches the concentration of salt in the ancient seas. Your cells are the direct descendants of unicellular organisms that developed billions of years ago. You have a reptilian brain and can walk courtesy of vertebra that developed 510 million years ago. You see because chlorophyll molecules mutated so that, like plant leaves, your eyes can capture the light from the sun. And in your mother's womb your tiny body repeated the whole proves of multicellular life on Earth, beginning as a single cell and then developing greater and greater complexity."

Judy Cannato, *Radical Amazement*

Ecological Conversion also entails

a loving awareness

that we are not disconnected

from the rest of creatures,

but joined in a splendid universal communion.

Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* #220

"Our bodies express all the history of life on this planet. And that history is also the history of every mountain, every river, every ocean, every pond and every millimeter of rock and soil, every wisp of water vapor and every breath of the atmosphere blowing ceaselessly around our globe. In our bodies flow the knowledge of an entire planet, an entire solar system, and the universe. It is nothing short of spectacular! What cause for celebration!"

Caroline Webb, "Weaving a World with Light"

In Native ways of knowing, human people are often referred to as "the younger brothers of Creation." We say that humans have the least experience with how to live and thus the most to learn—we must look to our teachers among the other species for guidance.

Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*

### Reflection

What do these quotes evoke in you?  
How do they stretch your thinking and understanding?

What are some concrete examples in your life that show your worldview is expanding?

Where is God's Spirit inviting you to grow?



"Circle of Summer" © Mary Southard, CSJ

[www.ministryofthearts.org](http://www.ministryofthearts.org)

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### Indigenous Wisdom

Will you teach your children what we have taught our children?

- That Earth is our mother.
- What befalls Earth befalls all people of Earth.
- This we know: Earth does not belong to us; we belong to Earth.
- All things are connected like the blood that unites us all.
- We did not weave the web of life; we are merely a strand in it.
- Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves.

Chief Seattle

### Prayer

Holy God, Creator of the Universe, we know that you are Mystery beyond mystery, yet our finite minds and fragile fears often want to contain you in a way that keeps us comfortable. We resist stretching our beliefs to include the new. We hesitate to break with the past, even if it is filled with illusion. Help us to be open to your revelation, not merely because it is new, but because it can bring us closer to the truth of who you are and who we are in you. As we encounter your mystery and love in the hearing of the new story of creation, may we be open to radical amazement and led into a way of living that embraces the connectedness of all that is. AMEN.

Judy Cannato, *Radical Amazement*

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