



COP 27 November 8th Reflections

2020. Pandemic. Hope? Three words I never thought to use together. Yet, seeing the pictures of clear skies (due to the lock downs), I was hopeful that these images could be a tipping point for us to wholeheartedly commit to addressing climate change. Instead, consumerism increased, creating demand for more “stuff” that ends up in landfills. In Timothy, St. Paul admonishes the community to practice self-control, have integrity in their teaching, and to be a model of good deeds in every respect. This applies to us today. We are invited to “reject godless ways and worldly desires and to live temperately.”

Too often we hear of record-breaking weather patterns and the resulting floods, heatwaves, and droughts. Working for the common good, improves all lives, including our own. Psalm 37 provides reassurance, “trust in the Lord and do good, that you may dwell in the land and be fed in security.”

On a recent visit to my country of birth, Zimbabwe, I was struck by two things. First, the erratic rainfall disrupting regular planting schedules, leading to shortfalls of wheat and maize, main staples needed to feed the nation. This has a devastating impact on food security and people’s livelihoods. Second, the piles of garbage that I saw along city streets. While local and federal offices blame each other, you see plumes of smoke in backyards because people have no choice but to burn their garbage. Of course, this pollutes the air, impacts health, seeps into water sources, has multiple downstream effects.

In his 2020 Encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis wrote, “To care for the world in which we live means to care for ourselves. Yet we need to think of ourselves more and more as a single family dwelling in a common home.” (17). Unfortunately, developing nations are impacted disproportionately by climate change. In Luke, Jesus reminds us that we have a duty to do what we have been commanded. Is God’s love not enough to compel us to support and advocate for our fellow nations in protecting and saving our planet? We can do this, if we choose to do so.

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