



COP 27 November 14th Reflections

“Praise to you, Lord.” This is the title of the encyclical, *Laudato Si'* by Pope Francis (2015), an encyclical totally dedicated to the environment. It all begins with wonder and praise; creation is full of mystery...and mystery is a source of child-like delight and wonder that precede any pragmatic approach to (use of) the earth and all her resources.

Have we forgotten that delight and wonder, asks the Pope? Modern humanity has rushing pell-mell, with every technological means, in exploiting resources and space on the planet for gain, for “progress,” for sale. This “rapidification,” as Pope Francis calls it, is an addictive ‘driveness’: we just cannot get enough...But, one wonders, enough of what?

The Ephesian Christians are asked to recover their zeal for good works; so is humanity with regard to this finite beauty called earth and the peoples on her. The blind beggar near Jericho revels in the hope that Jesus is—the possibility of healing his sight, physical and interior; he has fumbled far too long in the chaos of darkness. Humanity is fumbling in exaggerated pragmatism

and lack of spirit. Inattention to this dark chaos might cost the next generation the health of all life on this planet; it is finite in its tolerance and its resources.

Pope Francis is hopeful that we can develop technology with a better moral compass by which to apply technology and discern when to refrain from using it. In order to accomplish this the human community must mature from adolescents who think they own themselves and the world, to humble adulthood that delights and wonders over what we see, and to acknowledge our limits as well. We are a mystery, a delightful one. “Praise to you, Lord,” for all of this.

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The Gospel of Luke 18:35-43

Story of the blind man on the way to Jericho meeting Jesus and asking for his sight to be restored. The blind man’s story is our story; someone with a disease is introduced, there is an

encounter with Jesus. Bartimaeus continues to call out even more loudly, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me. Son of David, hear my cry! Please let me see!

The climate has changed, and this change has altered the way of living for so many people. In Kenya, for example, there are three school holidays in the year: April, August, and December. These holidays were planned to coincide with the peak periods in the agricultural cycle to allow children of various ages to help at home with sowing in April, weeding in August, and harvesting in December. Unfortunately, these activities have been affected by the climate change. For example, rains start later, when children have been home and gone back to school and so the weeding also will be delayed, and parents are left to do the work alone as the children are in school. Moreover, this also impacts the harvest. Crops do not perform so well because of too much rain or no rain at all.

In the Gospel, the man who was blind asks Jesus that he may see. Might it be that we also need to ask Jesus to remove our blindness or failure to see the damage that we are doing to our environment? Our home, the earth? Our ancestors venerated the earth so much that in my tribe my great grandparents worshipped nature. Spirits were associated with natural events such as mountains, rivers, land, harvests, sun, and moon. In fact, the name of the creator was Assis (Sun)! So, our ancestors revered the earth, our common home. What about us?

Sometimes we need help to get back on our feet, like Bartimaeus, to throw off the baggage which might be holding us down, that which blocks our path, that which prevents us from seeing the damage we are causing to our earth home. Jesus, have pity on us, that we may see!

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