



COP 27 November 18th Reflections

It's like that sometimes, isn't it? The sweet taste of something new, something important that we have been waiting for. Hoping for. But then something happens. The reality larger than our yearning sets in. The taste is still sweet to our lips, but the reality it forebodes is sour. As if the beauty cannot exist by itself, the sweetness cannot last. At least, does not last in its simplicity. The Word of God, commentators tell us, is sweet in John's mouth, but turns sour in his depths when as he is told to prophesy again to all the peoples and nations.

Folks like yourselves who have been participating in or following COP 27 events these past several days know that as simple as the truth is that we should act together for the sake of all members of the Earth community, and how sweet that vision is, the call to live it, to bring it home with to others is complicated. The thought of the work we are called to, the often-uphill battles the hard conversations, the dicey outcomes, are enough to sour the sweetness.

After leaving Galilee, the place where Jesus healed so many people, calmed storms, and walked on water, he arrives in Jerusalem, the city that kills its prophets. The sweetness of the lakeside (laced with sour) turn to the tumult of the temple. Jesus, who preached blessed are the peacemakers, overturns the tables. Sweetness yields to sour.

But notice also from the gospel reading: the leaders of the people "could find no way to accomplish their purpose because all the people were hanging on his words." Even after the upset at the temple, Jesus keeps on preaching. The response of the people to the preaching kept the leaders from apprehending Jesus. Sweetness and sour muddled together.

Thomas Berry, who called himself a "geologist," understood this. He said, the saints we need for today are people who can embrace the beautiful without turning away from the ugly. He also said the saints we need today are people who can embrace the painful without turning away from beauty. Sweet and sour. Sour and sweet. We are called to embrace them both.

It helps to remember, for both John and Jesus, the story ends with glory. John sees God's glory and Jesus is seated at his right hand. Somehow, always, the sweetness wins in the end.

As we leave COP 27 I hope we are filled with the sweetness of the beauty of creation, of what is possible when we act together for the good of all members of the Earth Community. We know the sourness will come, it has already and cannot be avoided. The sweetness itself calls us to

face difficult challenges. The sweetness, the promise of sweetness, the taste of God's word writ large in creation is our sustenance.

Trust that the sweetness we know and have experienced will sustain us through the sour until we complete this journey. As the Psalmist says: How sweet to my taste is your promise!

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