



COP 27 November 7th Reflections

As we join in prayer with all who are participating in UN Fourth Climate Change Conference 2022 (UNFCCC - COP (Conference of Parties 27) on 7 - 18 November 2022 in Egypt, I invite you to reflect on the readings for this day in the context of Earth as Word, God's Word.

In human terms, a word is an outward expression of a thought or an idea; it is learned early on as a child or as a beginner. It is a manifestation of one's desire to communicate. John makes this connection for us. *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was in God's presence, and the Word was God. He was present with God in the beginning. Through him all things came into being and apart from him nothing came to be. Whatever came to be in him, found life; life for the light of humankind".*(John 1:1-4) These passages tell us that Jesus, the second Person of the Holy Trinity, became matter. God's Word became 'Earth' and is part of our evolutionary story.

In Proverbs 8 we read: *"The Wisdom of God was there when God established the heavens"* (v.27); The Word of God was there when there were no depth there were no fountains or springs of water (v.24), before the mountains were settled into place (v.25) and the earth and the fields were not made (v.26), the skies were made firm and the foundations of the earth were fixed fast (v.28) and limits of the seas set (v.29). The Word was there *"beside him as his craftsman"* (v. 30) God was there *"at the first, before the earth"* (v. 23) and all that comprised creation (nature).

A new spiritual perspective has evolved with the Universe Story which we have learned through science; that the universe took 13.8 Billion years to evolve and continues to expand. Within this Story, the Earth has taken 5 Billion years to evolve from hydrogen and helium to more complex beings. In this cosmic drama, we see the relentless direction for more complexity in the biological and physical world. This is portrayed beautifully in a meditative walk we call Cosmic Journey which is located in Baguio City, Philippines where Maryknoll Sisters engage in ministry. The Journey starts with the elements, weaving through biological evolution of plants, birds, flowers, animals, through cultural and religious evolution shown in expressions and symbols in the Station of Religions and ends in the bioshelter, the home of humans.

Theologically speaking, what is really going on in evolution is that God is becoming increasingly incarnate in the world and the world is exploding "upward into God" (Teilhard de Chardin, *Future of Man:83* in Haught:78). Evolution is a book of revelation; God seeks to become more incarnate in the world. (Ilia Delio) The universe/Earth is unfinished and God continues to call us to co-create the future. God is increasingly revealing God-self to us through this evolutionary story of the Earth. This invitation to co-create the future is a participation in the Divine Energy that communicates Divine Love for the world/Earth. To create is to unite and bring into relationship in a unitive way. When we accept and heed this invitation, we become more attuned to God's field of energy of love. This gives us a strong sense for living, 'zest for living' a Teilhard de Chardin calls it.

“Creation is not a backdrop for human drama but the disclosure of God’s identity” (Ilia Delio)
Creation is One Earth Community in the great expanding Universe. It is in this context of Earth as Word that God communicates God’s love for us. Creation is unfinished; the Universe is still coming into being. Matter evolves into Life which in turn evolves into Thought which evolves into the Spirit and to Cosmic Christ. From biodiversity to cultural/religious diversity, God leads us to greater communion in the noosphere, a web of mind-generated ideas, a convergence of ideas beckoning us to communion. Love energy brings us to Christogenesis.

In this context, we ponder the first Reading where Paul tells us that to acquire a knowledge of truth is in accord to godliness. (Titus 1:1). This knowledge of truth about Climate Change impels us to unite with others to collaborate to implement Climate goals. Climate Change disasters have been experienced in the United States, Europe, Asia, and many other parts of the world.

This year, UNFCCC - COP 27 will focus particular attention on strengthening adaptation and resilience, mitigating emissions, facilitating a just transition, and increasing funding and collaboration for essential climate solutions among government and business leaders. Implementation is the focus to deliver greenhouse gas emission reductions and help ensure a just transition to a net-zero economy which alleviates poverty and helps secure a sustainable future. Climate action, an ongoing process, requires extraordinary collaboration to achieve innovative solutions—together.

Psalms 24 states that “The Lord’s are the Earth and its fullness, the world and those who dwell in it”. Earth is God’s and its fullness with all of Creation, those who dwell in the Earth, those who belong to One Earth Community, humans and other species on Earth. God’s love for Earth (Creation) is so deep that God expressed this love through God’s Word. *“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life”* (John 3:16).

And how do we have eternal life? How do we partake of God’s life? How do we get to know God and to love God? Micah answers *“what the Lord requires of you: Only to do right, and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God”* (v. 8) To walk humbly with our God is to know and love what God has brought forth into being, the whole Creation.

The third Reading offers advice on how to stay the course, on how to beware not to cause scandals and bad example for others to follow. In the context of Earth as Word, not caring for Earth is an ecological sin which is committed through indifference, negligence, greed, mindlessness, abuse and misuse of Earth’s resources, and waste, among other failures and omissions. However, since the overall goal is for everyone to be in communion with one another, we are exhorted to forgive and lead others to ecological conversion (Laudato Si #216-221). Only faith in God’s mercy, our compassion for one another and for Earth as God’s Word would lead us to the miracle of Earth’s healing, protection and newness.

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