



International Solidarity Reflection

School Sisters of Notre Dame

Shalom

Solidarity with All Creation

September 2019

Introduction

As we consider Solidarity with All Creation, we are also celebrating the Season of Creation. The theme for 2019 is “**Web of Life: biodiversity as God’s blessing.**” We ponder how critical biodiversity is for the sake of the well-being of the whole planet, including humanity!

Call to Prayer

We gather in the name of the Triune God, Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer of the Earth and all its creatures!

Praise be to the Holy Trinity! God is sound and life, Creator of the Universe, Source of all life, whom the angels sing; wondrous Light of all mysteries known or unknown to humankind, and life that lives in all. (Hildegard of Bingen, 1098-1179)

Experience

There have been other mass extinctions on our planet. For example, the era in which the vast majority of dinosaurs disappeared. Yet, the current age we live in is going through an unprecedented and rapid loss of species. Why do we care?

Pope Francis addresses this question in *Laudato Si'* (#89)

The created things of this world are not free of ownership: “For they are yours, O Lord, who love the living” (Wis 11:26). This is the basis of our conviction that, as part of the universe, called into being by one Father, all of us are linked by unseen bonds and together form a kind of universal family, a sublime communion which fills us with a sacred, affectionate and humble respect. Here I would reiterate that “God has joined us so closely to the world around us that we can feel the desertification of the soil almost as a physical ailment, and the extinction of a species as a painful disfigurement”.

We may not see or feel this loss on a daily personal basis. But, as an example, at one time there were 8,000 species of apples. Today there are only about 100 and you probably see less than a dozen at the grocery store.

We also hear of the desperate plight of the bee population. Overuse of chemicals as well as loss of habitat are pushing bees into the “vulnerable” category of species. Without bees most of our crops would need to be pollinated by hand or would become extinct themselves. There really is a “web of life” where “everything is connected.”

What is happening to cause such a loss? Paul Andersen at Bozeman Science (<https://youtu.be/vCkDxD0DV0Q>) uses the acronym HI COP to outline the causes.

Habitat Loss

Invasion of Non-native Species

Climate Change

Over-harvesting

Pollution

Reflection

Each one of us is a node point in the *web of life*. Sit and reflect on all the lines of connection within the created world that touch you and all the lines of connection that go forth from you out into the universe. Imagine what might be different in your life if many of those connections are severed? What would be lost if your favorite place to pray was destroyed by a bulldozer? What would be lost if flowers would no longer be pollinated? What would be the consequences of vast amounts of your country being either flooded or turned to desert? Now consider what connections would be gone through your negligence. What changes in the world if you become indifferent? How does the chaos in the world increase because I am not careful with trash. What dies or who gets sick if I choose to use toxic chemicals?

Now consciously connect yourself back to the splendor of creation.

Action

1. Learn more about the wildlife and ecology of your area. Find out what species of plants or animals may be endangered.
2. Reflect on *Love Gives Everything* sections 2 and 6
3. Read about the United Nations Climate Summit in September at www.un.org/en/climatechange.
4. Immerse yourself in music that celebrates creation.
5. Find resources for prayer and activities at www.seasonofcreation.org and www.catholicclimatemovement.global

Closing Prayer

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists. Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty. Fill us with peace that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

Creative Spirit enlighten our hearts and remain with your world.

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light.

Creative Spirit enlighten our hearts and remain with your world.

We thank you for being with us each day. Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.”

Creative Spirit enlighten our hearts and remain with your world.

Adapted from A Prayer for the Earth, Pope Francis, Laudato Si’