

## 8<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time

What in the world? Temperatures in the 70s in February? Could it be global warming? It certainly is a change in climate! Whatever the reason, why worry? It felt great! What in the world? Torrential rains, thunder and lightning last night? Not so great if you were caught out in it. It seems like the only thing you can count on when it comes to weather these days is that you can't. Nothing is predictable. What in the world? Whatever the cause of those 70 degree temperatures these past days, it felt like everything was right with the world. What a lovely respite from winter! Just one of those days when you appreciate the blessedness of the earth and the gifts of creation. No worries!

Sounds like today's gospel doesn't it? Why worry about what you will eat or wear? Look at creation. Look at the birds of the air! Does God not clothe and feed them? Why worry?

Why worry when we are told that the globe is warming at dangerous levels? Why worry when sea levels are rising and Arctic ice is melting? Why worry when countries like Sudan, Nigeria, Somalia, Yemen are experiencing famine and thousands are dying. Why worry when there is enough food to feed the world but because of waste and excess consumption in some areas and civil wars in others, millions are dying of starvation? Why worry that whole species are disappearing?

Pope Francis, certainly a faithful follower of Jesus expressed his worry for the planet in his encyclical, *Laudato Si!*. You remember that don't you?

Mother Earth now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she "groans in travail" (Rom 8:22). We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth (cf. Gen 2:7); our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters.

Two years ago, I used the text of *Laudato Si* for my annual retreat. I am not a scientist. I cannot debate the question of global warming, climate change etc. But I, like you breathe this world's air and I worry about places where it's dangerous to breathe. I, like you drink this world's water and I worry about places where there is drought or water is unpotable. I, like you feel the warmth of the sun and worry about its burning through the ozone layer. I, like you see the beauty of wild flowers clothed in majesty and birds flying free and worry about the ecosystem that is threatened with deforestation.

I spent the week in prayer praising God for the beauty of creation and worrying and wondering what the future would be if we don't stop exploiting her resources for the sake of mammon. Mamona, an Aramaic word, A Jesus word. And he says quite clearly. You cannot serve God and Mamona. And at the end of the week I wrote the

lyrics to a song called Laudato Si! (You'll hear it at the 11:30)

What in the world have we done to this earth with its beauty and splendor? If we only have the eyes with which to see, Mother Earth once teeming with all kinds of life, now gasps for air and thirst for water. Can she find a way to renew her? Can we see change? Yes, a Sea Change! Laudato Si! Praise Be. To the God who creates and sustains all life, let us sing Laudato Si Praise Be

What in the world have we done to this earth with all its beauty and harmony? If we only have the ears with which to hear Mother Earth once ringing with all kinds of sounds now silences the songs of beast and birds. May she sing to us the way to renew her? Can we hear change? Yes, a key change Laudato Si, Laudato Si, Praise Be. To the God who creates and sustains all life, let us sing Laudato Si Praise Be....

The first reading today reminds us that God is not only father but mother. There is no other text that is as tender as this one. God saying, Can a mother forget her infant, be without tenderness for the child of her womb? Even should she forget I will never forget you. Sometimes we forget that this world was God's first-born. This planet with the fish of the sea and the birds of the air. Or to quote Jesuit Gerard Manley Hopkins:

Our mothering God can never forget her first born. But do we? Do we forget our Mother earth who is the life source of air, food and water?

Lent begins this Wednesday. Lent comes from the lengthening of days, another Springtime. Perhaps this Lent instead of focusing on our selves, we might remember our mother the earth and do something. Metro Catholic Climate movement is sponsoring many events in the next two months. They are happening in churches like ours.

Let me taking a bit of liberty with another Jesuit's praise of creation. Pied Beauty by Gerard Manley Hopkins.

Glory be to God for dappled things –

For skies of couple-colour as a brindled cow;  
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;  
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;  
Landscape plotted and pieced – fold, fallow, and plough;  
And áll trádes, their gear and tackle and trim.

All things counter, original, spare, strange;  
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)  
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;  
She mothers-forth whose beauty is past change:  
Praise her.