

Creation II: Year B 22/23 September 2018

Patricia Kay Jue, lay preacher in training

By being made in G-d's image  
humanity to called to share in G-d's creative work of caring for creation

Genesis 1:26-28

Psalm 8

*Manifesto: the Mad Farmer Liberation Front* a poem by Wendell Berry<sup>1</sup>

Mark 10:41-45

In the beginning, G-d created.<sup>2</sup> G-d separated the waters. The one above, G-d called sky. The one below, G-d called the seas. G-d separated the seas from the land, and so the mountains were formed. G-d created the plants, and the animals. "G-d created mankind in G-d's own image...and blessed them and said "Be fruitful, increase in number, fill the earth...rule over the fish of the sea, birds in the sky and over every other living creature that moves over the ground...[and] every seed-bearing plant and tree that has fruit."<sup>3</sup> G-d created, and looked upon all that had been made, and said "it is very good."

G-d said "Be fruitful..." And so, from our small localized family groups, we humans spread throughout the entire world, leaving footprints and clay dubbed handprints, pottery filled ships and stone monuments, to mark our pathway. G-d said "Be fruitful, increase in number, fill the earth...", and so we left mountains of mining debris, streams of electronic waste and ocean currents of discard plastic, marching ever onward and outward, until we now find ourselves in the "Anthropocene."

This word, "An-thro-po-cene" is the new buzzword, especially among my fellow academics and my conservation minded friends. "Anthropocene," this word describes the current age. Anthropocene is a new time period, where human activity is the dominant influence on the climate and the environment, indeed, on the entirety of creation. When we count the worth of a pig solely by the metrics of the pork belly market, when corn harvested by the sweat of the farmer's brow is simply an input into the vast river of corn syrup, and when tomatoes are gassed with ethylene to satisfy our desire for a bit of summer in the middle of January, one does get the feeling that something has gone terribly, terribly wrong.

---

<sup>1</sup> From Meyers, Robin. *The Underground Church*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012. (p.247).

<sup>2</sup> Following chumrah, this homily writer uses G-d for the written name.

<sup>3</sup> Paraphrased from Genesis 1

And now (we who have used natural resources in far greater excess than our fair share) we stand aghast at what we have done, and wonder “how did we get here?” After all we had been warned, and guided by modern day saints and prophets, folks such as Rachel Carlson, Al Gore, Wendell Berry and William Anders:

Rachel Carlson, the marine biologist whose book “The Silent Spring” sang out the canary warning of what might happen if we do not care for the fish of the sea, and the birds in the sky

Al Gore, the politician whose film “The Inconvenient Truth” brought the terms “climate change” and “global warning” to the tips of so many peoples’ tongues, both to those who acknowledge and those who deny.

Wendell Berry, farmer and writer, whose poem we just heard, who taught us that the value of land depends on the health of microbes and other little creatures in the soil. Berry, like the prophets of old, continually reminded us that Gospel and caring for Creation go hand-in-hand.

And Williams Anders... Yes, engineer and astronaut William Anders...

On Christmas Eve, 1968, Bill turned around and took a photograph. That picture, taken from Apollo 9, became known as “**Earth-rise.**” That image of the Earth, as a small blue hemisphere hovering over moon’s horizon, captured people’s attention around the world.<sup>4</sup> For many people, that view of the blue marble that we call earth led to spiritual renewal. That iconic image brought new resolve to protect our fragile island home. We discovered, or re-discovered, the beauty of G-d’s creation. From a chance photograph, captured on Christmas Eve, the night of the birth of our savior’s birth, Jesus, the Christ, we are reminded of the earth as G-d sees it: precious, unique, full of the beauty and the promise of abundance: wonderful to behold.

In the words of the Psalmist<sup>6</sup>

“When I consider your heavens,  
the work of your fingers,  
the moon and the stars,

---

<sup>4</sup> “Earthrise: the image that changed our view of the planet”, Michael McCarthy, <https://www.independent.co.uk/environment/nature/earthrise-the-image-that-changed-our-view-of-the-planet-7837041.html>, Tuesday 12 June 2012

<sup>5</sup> The picture lead Anders to question his belief in a god who created humans in his own image as he ponder how insignificant humans and the earth appeared from outer space. However others found that image changed their world-view and increased their belief in an Almighty Creator. “William Anders” from the Freedom From Religion Foundation website, <https://ffrf.org/news/day/dayitems/item/17415-william-anders>

<sup>6</sup> Psalm 8

which you have set in place,  
what is mankind that you are mindful of them,  
human beings that you care for them?  
You [G-d] have made them a little lower than the heavenly ones  
and crowned them with glory and honor.

By these words, we are reminded that we humans are called to exercise authority, crowded as we are like rulers. We humans are created in G-d's own image, the very G-d who nurtures, sustains and redeems. We have been blessed by G-d to "fill the earth...and rule over the fish of the sea, birds in the sky and over every other living creature that moves over the ground..."

G-d has gifted to **all** of humanity the abundance of the Earth. G-d has called upon **us** to share in G-d's creative work, to take on the responsibility of caring for the rest of creation. Ruling, given dominion....what does that mean, especially for us, as followers of the Christ?

In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus tells to his followers, "do not be like the Gentiles, the non-believers." For those rulers exercise their authority by looking down from on high, taking all and giving back nothing, exploiting others for personal gain.<sup>7</sup> Instead, Jesus instructs his followers, "be servants." love the Lord., love the World. Go, serve, be stewards, be beacons of hope. Remember the great abundance of the earth: **all** comes from G-d.

So then, with G-d's help, may we go out, planting and nurturing for the ages, rather than for thinking only of the next fiscal year, so that how we live proclaims that we are indeed formed in the image of G-d, creator, redeemer and sustainer.

---

<sup>7</sup> Mark 10:44-45. The Jewish followers of Jesus upon hearing his words would be reminded of passages in the Hebrew Scriptures such as Deuteronomy 17:14-20.