

From the Office of Peace, Justice and Ecological Integrity
Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth

Dear Sisters and Seton Associates,

The Congregation Peace, Justice and Ecological Integrity Committee recently devoted a meeting to reflecting on the feedback from Congregation Day. We were very pleased to see how often themes related to justice, peace and ecological integrity surfaced. We also noted the desire for “ongoing enrichment and education about social issues,” and the question, “How do we develop our capacity (theologically, spiritually) as a congregation to live environmentally responsibly?” The Committee also discussed how the business of our lives, difficulties of travelling and schedules, often make attendance at enrichment and educational programs a challenge. We decided to experiment with new ways of formation in issues of peace, justice and sustainability.

As a first effort, we decided to make available a prayer/reflection process that can be used by individuals or small groups in conjunction with a viewing of the excellent presentation “Principles of Sustainability,” given by Sister Caroljean (Cj) Willie, SC at the Sisters of Charity Federation Meeting in June of 2014. Find attached *Principles of Sustainability: A Reflection and Prayer Process for the Sisters of Charity Federation*. This reflection process contains instructions for how to watch Cj’s presentation online and prayer and reflection/discussion questions to be used by individuals and small groups. A second attachment provides a copy of the PowerPoint slides from Cj’s presentation. These materials will also be posted on the website www.scnj.org

During the summer months when schedules are a little lighter, we invite Sisters and Seton Associates to gather in small groups, to watch the presentation and to engage in prayer and conversation about it. All you need is the attached material, a computer with internet access, a small group and about an hour and a half of time.

If a larger group would want to gather to watch the video together (e.g. in the Convent or Villa), please contact Donna Sartor about setting up that up: 973-290-5345
dsartor@scnj.org

If you have any questions about using the material or accessing the video, please contact the PJCI Office at (973) 290- 5404 or tmoran@scnj.org We would also appreciate some feedback about how you found the process and if it’s worth trying again.

Fr. Terence J. Moran
Director, Office of Peace, Justice and Ecological Integrity



Principles of Sustainability
A Reflection and Prayer Process for the Sisters of Charity Federation

Presentation by Sister Caroljean (Cj) Willie, SC

Caroljean Willie is a Sister of Charity of Cincinnati. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology, a Master's Degree in Reading and a Ph.D. in Multicultural Education. She has extensive experience working cross-culturally throughout the United States, the Caribbean and Latin America as a teacher, teacher-trainer, cultural diversity consultant and retreat director. She is the author of *Praying All Ways: A Multiple Intelligences Approach to Prayer* as well as numerous articles in professional journals. She is a frequent speaker at regional and national conferences and has also given presentations in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America. She currently resides in the greater New York area where she is completing her term as the NGO representative at the United Nations for the Sisters of Charity Federation and also works with microfinancing projects in Africa.

► The Office of Peace, Justice Ecological Integrity of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth, Convent Station, NJ offers to you this reflection resource to be used along with an online presentation by Sister Carol Jean (Cj) Willie, Sisters of Charity Federation NGO Representative at the United Nations. Cj addressed the 2014 Meeting of the Federation on the topic of **Principles of Sustainability**.

► To view the presentation:

To view this video, you need a computer, iPad or Smartphone with internet access.

In order to view the video, click on this link:

<http://faith.streamspot.com/venue/?churchname=soc>

This will take you to the Stream Spot site of the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati. When you reach this spot, click on the box “On Demand” to the left of the screen. This will lead you to a drop down menu. Scroll down until you come to the video SC Federation – Principles of Sustainability. Click on this video and it should start of play on your computer screen. You are welcome to watch the beginning of the video which has the opening prayer and announcements of this day of the Federation meeting. If you wish you can move to the 7 minute mark where Cj’s presentation begins.

► We recommend that you view this presentation as a local community, Congregation reflection group, or with any group of sisters or associates. We present this prayer and reflection process that can be used by a group viewing the presentation. Members of the group should take responsibility for organizing the session, making copies of this reflection process, checking on the technology, leading and picking readers for the prayer, keeping time, etc. You can also adapt the process for individual use. The presentation is about 40 minutes long so an hour and a half to two hour gathering should be scheduled to allow time for viewing the presentation, prayer and discussion.

► In this presentation you will:

- be invited to see sustainability as a lens through which other justice issues can be understood.
- learn how the United Nations brings together world governments to work together on sustainable development.
- reflect on what it means to live more sustainably as a religious congregation.

► This reflection guide offers you:

- An **Opening Prayer** to use before viewing the presentation
- Questions for Reflection and Sharing** after viewing the presentation
- A **Closing Prayer** to close your reflection.
- Links to Resources** mentioned in the presentation for further reflection after the presentation.
- Included as a separate attachment is a copy of the slides from Cj’s PowerPoint.

► Opening Prayer:

After the computer has been set up for viewing, someone invites the group to spend a few moments in silence to center themselves, using these words:

In silence, call to mind a person, a group of people, some other creature, or a place that you love or has special meaning for you. Allow the feeling of affection to well up in you. As you gaze at this special being or place, say to them: May you be happy. May you be well. May you be safe. May you be peaceful and at ease.

Pause for silence (five minutes)

At the conclusion of the silent reflection, the leader invites the group to pray together this prayer adapted from St. Vincent de Paul:

Gracious God, may you yourself be the bond
which unites the hearts of all those who live and preach the gospel
in a common attitude of humility, of unity, of respect for one another.

Give us trust and confidence in your guidance
so that we might never fail to raise our voices in praise of your goodness,
so wide, so deep, everlasting.

May the mutual affection which you are fostering among us
grow steadily and flourish
and may the fruit of our efforts in favor of a world
more peaceful, more just, more verdant, constantly increase.

Strengthen us especially when the task seems wearisome and overwhelming.
Be yourself our reward, exceedingly great. Amen.

► View the presentation [Principles of Sustainability](#).

► Questions for Reflection/Sharing

1. What initial **feelings** arise in you as you process the information in this presentation about how dangerously close we are to the tipping point on the 9 sustainability benchmarks?
2. What was a **new learning or insight** for you about the meaning of sustainability?
3. Read the questions Cj poses for sustainable practices in religious congregations.
 - What initiatives has your congregation taken to protect your land (e.g. conservation easement, etc.)
 - What kind of recycling does your congregation do?
 - Has your congregation divested itself of investments connected to the oil and gas industries?
 - Do you offer workshops/seminars on environmental sustainability for your members? For the surrounding community?
 - Do you have land which you use for organic gardening?
 - Do you buy local produce when it is in season?
 - Do you have land which you use for Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs)?
 - Do you have specific ministries related to environmental sustainability?
 - Are we educating ourselves and others about economic alternatives?

-What is there to celebrate in your Congregation as you read these questions?

-Where is the “implementation gap” in your Congregation as you read these questions?

-What is there to celebrate in your own local community as you read these questions?

-Where is the “implementation gap” in your own local community as you read these questions?
4. “You cannot protect the environment unless you empower people, you inform them, and you help them understand that these resources are their own, that they must protect them.” Wangari Maathai

Cj invites us to connect sustainability to the traditional Vincentian focus on empowerment of those made poor. What ideas for your own ministry arise when you reflect on her questions?

- How are we empowering people to think and speak for themselves?
- Are we giving people the tools needed to lift themselves out of poverty?
- Are we educating people about sustainability issues in the work we do in housing?
- Are we offering information about, and materials for, container gardens?
- Are we working with people at the local level to reclaim green spaces and garden plots?

► Closing Prayer

Reader:” What you are about to undertake is a great work. I pray that our Lord will bless your leadership.” St. Vincent de Paul

Reader: "We are about the Great Work. ... Beside the particular work we do and the particular lives we lead, we have a Great Work that everyone is involved in and no one is exempt from. ... From here on, the primary judgment of all human institutions, professions, programs and activities will be determined by the extent to which they inhibit, ignore, or foster a mutually-enhancing human/Earth relationship.” Thomas Berry

Reflect in silence about one action you would like to undertake to do your part in the Great Work. Share this action with the group. After each person has shared the whole group responds by repeating Vincent’s words:

"What you are about to undertake is a great work. We pray that our Lord will bless your leadership."

After each has shared, all join in the closing prayer:

Saint Vincent de Paul, you saw the face of Jesus in those broken and made poor. With your courage and zeal, may we heal our broken Earth. Mother Seton, you delighted in nature, radiant with God’s presence. Give us discernment to see God’s presence in Earth. Our founding sisters, with imagination and creativity, you met the needs of your age. May we respond to the needs of our time and the call of Earth and Earth’s children. God of Boundless Charity, you invite us to live simply, to live sustainably, and to live in solidarity with the poor. Help us to respond to that invitation with conviction and generosity.

► For Further Study and Reflection:

Investigate one or more of these resources that Cj mentioned in her presentation.

The Earth Charter

<http://www.earthcharterinaction.org/content/pages/Read-the-Charter.html>

Green Faith

<http://greenfaith.org/>

St. Francis Pledge

<http://catholicclimatecovenant.org/the-st-francis-pledge/>

Vincentian Family Statement on Climate Change

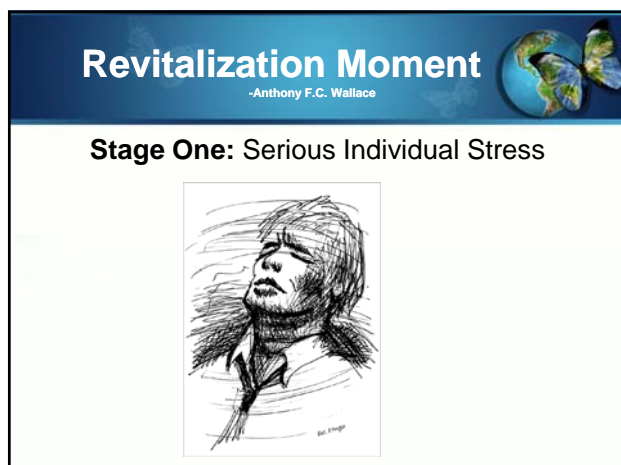
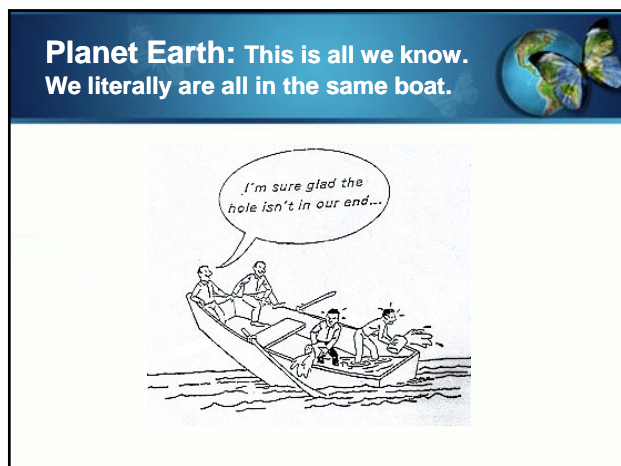
http://www.srcharitycinti.org/news_events/images/Social%20Justice%20Collaboration%20Climate%20Change%20Statement%2011-4-13.pdf

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

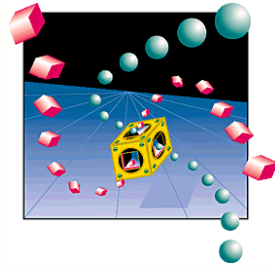
<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.html>

Place these concluding words of The Earth Charter near your mirror or other place where you will see them early in the day and pray them daily.

Let ours be a time remembered for
the awakening of a new reverence for life,
the firm resolve to achieve sustainability,
the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace,
and the joyful celebration of life.



Stage Three: People agree there is a problem, but not how to cope with it.



IPCC Report 2014



- The latest report from the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) said climate change is happening already and that the signs are everywhere, from melting glaciers and sea ice to more frequent wild fires, extreme heat waves and damaged crops.
- It warned of ever more dangerous impacts without rapid action to curb carbon emissions, including extreme weather, sea level rise and species extinctions.

21st Century Realities



- The wealthiest 20% of humankind enjoy over 80% of total world income.
- The bottom 20% share only 1%.
- Half of the world's population lives on less than \$2.50 a day.
- 1 billion live in chronic hunger and close to 2 billion are trapped in multidimensional poverty.

- Humanity's ecological footprint now exceeds the planet's bio-capacity by over 50%.
- Three of nine planetary boundaries that define the safe operating space for human life on Earth have been breached.

Planetary Boundaries

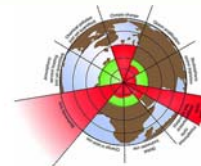


- **Climate change**
- **Biodiversity loss**
- **Biogeochemical** (nitrogen and phosphorous inputs to biosphere and oceans)
- Ozone depletion
- Chemical pollution
- Freshwater consumption
- Ocean acidification
- Land use
- Atmospheric aerosols

The nine planetary boundaries...



"...define a safe operating space for humanity, within which humanity can continue to develop and thrive for generations to come. Crossing these boundaries could generate abrupt or irreversible environmental changes. Respecting the boundaries reduces the risks to human society of crossing these thresholds."





Background

1972 United Nations
Stockholm Conference on
the Human Environment

*To deal with the need to put into place
structures to deal with needed Global
environmental governance.*

UN Environmental
Program (UNEP) was
created, in Nairobi.



Leadership of Canadian
Maurice Strong

1983
Convening the Brundtland
Commission

- ❖ Species extinction
- ❖ Resource depletion

1987
Brundtland Commission
Report

Our Common Future

Defined sustainable development



Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland

Sustainable Development

*Is defined for the first time~
Environmental, social and economic
development
that meets the needs of the present
without compromising
the ability of future generations
to meet their own needs.*



The Three Spheres of Sustainability



Adapted from the 2002
University of Michigan
Sustainability Assessment

June, 1992
Earth Summit - Rio De Janeiro

UN Conference on Environment and Development

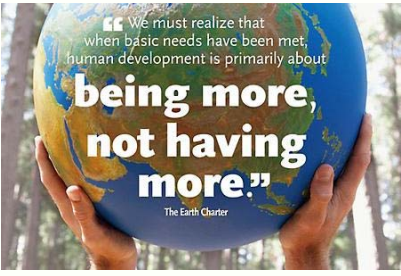
Conference Secretary General: Maurice Strong





The Earth Charter

RESPECT AND CARE FOR THE
COMMUNITY OF LIFE
ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE
DEMOCRACY, NONVIOLENCE
AND PEACE



“We must realize that when basic needs have been met, human development is primarily about

being more, not having more.”

The Earth Charter

Moving to Implementation...



Brundtland Report Agenda 21 Barbados Plan of Action Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 MDGs Johannesburg Plan of Implementation Mauritius Strategy of Implementation



In September, 2007, the President of Brazil proposed ~

- *to hold a new Conference in 2012*
- *to be hosted by Brazil: The Rio+20 Conference.*


Secretary General

Report of April 1, 2010 A/CONF.216/PC/2

Sustainable Development is like a **bridge**. It seeks to bring together the 3 domains among:

- Developed-developing nations
- Governments, businesses and civil society
- Science and public policy
- City and countryside
- Present and future generations.

- Development is the **midwife** of sustainability, just as sustainability is the **life support system** for development.



Sha Zukang, Sec. Gen. of UNCS2012/Rio+20 said on March 8, 2011:



“Rio+20 is humanity’s chance to commit to a transition to a green economy and to lift people out of poverty. We cannot wait another 20 years.”

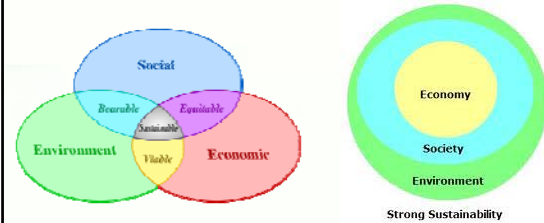
Leadership

UN Secretary General

- ❖ UN delivering as one system
- ❖ Fifty-fifty-fifty
- ❖ "Do not let the perfect be the enemy of the good."



Changing views



Rio+20 Outcome Document

- A process to develop a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
 - Which will build on Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and converge with the post-2015 development agenda
 - Inclusive and transparent intergovernmental process open to all stakeholders



Post 2015 Development Agenda

"The global framework and set of goals on sustainable development and poverty eradication which will replace the Millennium Development Goals when they expire in 2015."



Creation of Open Working Group (OWG)
to submit report to 68th General Assembly

- 30 representatives designed to achieve



Members of the OWG

AFRICAN GROUP

- Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Kenya, Tanzania, Benin, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Congo

ASIA-PACIFIC GROUP

- Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Bhutan, Thailand, Viet Nam, India, Iran, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, China, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Cyprus, United Arab Emirates, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Japan, Nepal

EASTERN EUROPEAN GROUP

- Hungary, Belarus, Serbia, Croatia, Bulgaria, Montenegro, Slovenia, Poland and Romania



WESTERN EUROPEAN AND OTHER GROUP

- Australia, Netherlands, Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Canada, Israel, USA, Denmark, Ireland, Norway, France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Spain and Turkey

LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN GROUP

- Colombia, Guatemala, Barbados, Bahamas, Guyana, Haiti, Trinidad and Tobago, Mexico, Peru, Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Nicaragua




INPUT PHASE	CONSENSUS BUILDING PHASE	GENERAL ASSEMBLY
March 2013 – Feb 2014 Member States (OWG) receive input from sessions defined in its programme of work, stakeholder events and the UN system	March 2014 – Sept 2014 OWG consults upon recommended goals, targets and starts to form consensus on the contents of its final report	Sept 2014 OWG presents its report to the UN General Assembly. The report becomes an official input for the Post-2015 Development Agenda



SDG Goals must be:

- Action-oriented
- Concise
- Easy to communicate
- Limited in number
- Aspirational
- Global in nature
- Universally applicable to all countries taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities (cbdr).





Some Guiding Principles for Sustainable Development

- Living within environmental limits
- Achieving a sustainable economy
- Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society for all
- Environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens
- Warfare is inherently destructive of sustainable development
- Peace, development and environmental protection are interdependent and indivisible.



Stage Four: Emergence of a new world view and the restructuring of old institutions to enable it.

“The range of our experiences has gone far beyond that of our ancestors; the answers which they gave for the questions of their lives no longer serve to answer the questions of our reality.”

—Miriam Therese McGillis, OP



"Those who 'walk their talk,' who practice what they preach, especially in the environmental-ecological area, have been exceedingly rare. And for good reason. For walking the talk, ecologically speaking, requires an ability to resist the direction of mainstream society, and takes a good deal of personal energy, patience, and persistence. Few individuals and even fewer groups have what it takes..."

A notable exception is women's religious communities, communities of American (and Canadian) women who have been heroically and courageously walking their talk in many other difficult areas of life and facing and overcoming exceedingly difficult challenges. Some number of these women, individually and collectively, have moved heart and soul into ecological concern. This concern takes the form of living and modeling an ecologically positive and sustainable lifestyle, in sharp contradistinction to the way we expect most people to live in our society."

-John E. Carroll in *Sustainability and Spirituality*

The question is...

Are we living and modeling an ecologically positive and sustainable lifestyle? To what extent? How can we do it better?

 A graphic with a green background. On the left, the text reads: "The Greatest Threat to Our Planet Is the Belief That Someone Else Will Save It" followed by "-Robert Swan". On the right, there is a stylized illustration of a tree whose roots are a globe, with butterflies flying around it.

What have we said?

- AVOID the implementation gap!

 A graphic featuring a red circle with a white horizontal bar across its center. Inside the white bar, the text "MIND THE GAP" is written in white capital letters.

- Review your congregational documents.

"The social justice representatives for the US congregations of the Sisters of Charity Federation of North America invite us all to respond to the crisis of global climate change as one of the central ethical issues of our time. Vincent de Paul challenged us to see persons living in poverty as the presence of Christ."

Fullness of our charism challenges us:

- To efficacious compassion toward the brokenness of Earth and its life systems;
- To recognize that persons living in poverty and on the margins suffer first from the effects of global climate change;
- To learn to discern and celebrate the presence of God in Earth;
- To evaluate our lifestyle choices; and
- To integrate this heightened awareness in our consciousness, congregational documents and actions.

UN and You

- Earth Day
- Thoughts about the Environmental and Economic Crises
- Sustainable Development
- Water
- Climate Change

How Are We Called to Respond in Our Lives and Ministries Today?

In Our Congregations:

- What initiatives has your congregation taken to protect your land (e.g. conservation easement, etc.)
- What kind of recycling does your congregation do?
- Has your congregation divested itself of investments connected to the oil and gas industries?
- Do you offer workshops/seminars on environmental sustainability for your members? For the surrounding community?

- Do you have land which you use for organic gardening?
- Do you buy local produce when it is in season?
- Do you have land which you use for Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs)?
- Do you have specific ministries related to environmental sustainability?
- Are we educating ourselves and others about economic alternatives?



- Prince Charles launched a blistering attack on free market economics - calling for a radical shake-up of capitalism to save the planet. He said "society's 'current operating model' was destroying the environment and should be transformed to tackle the growing threat of climate change at a conference on inclusive capitalism in London for business leaders.
- The capitalist era is passing... not quickly, but inevitably. A new economic paradigm -- the Collaborative Commons -- is rising in its wake that will transform our way of life. – Jeremy Rifkin

- "This year's World Economic Forum in Davos saw intense debate about the future of capitalism. Many participants were asking whether capitalism, with all of its excesses, still has a place in today's world. The media, meanwhile, speculated that if even managers and bankers were raising doubts about the system's future, then perhaps capitalism had already been laid to rest in Davos."

- ***The Price of Inequality*** – Joseph Stiglitz
- A Steady State Economy
- A Covenant Economy



Pope Francis addresses capitalism directly noting that there is "a crude and naïve trust in the goodness of those wielding economic power." He is concerned that this culture has produced global indifference. Society seems content to believe that poverty is somebody else's problem. For him, the poor are not only exploited but excluded. They have become "the outcast, the leftovers." He hammers the injustice of growing inequality...In this system which tends to devour everything which stands in the way of increased profits, whatever is fragile, like the environment, is defenseless before the interests of a deified market, which becomes the only rule."

The problem with GDP as a measure of a country's wealth

"A High-GDP person buys prepared food, has an enormous flat-screened TV and drives a gas-guzzling SUV."



- On the other hand, those who grow their own vegetables, use public transit or limit their demands on energy aren't as useful to society, measured by traditional economic worth." –John Gertner, NY Times





"The Gross National Product does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education or the joy of their play. It does not include the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages, the intelligence of our public debate or the integrity of our public officials. It measures neither our wit nor our courage, neither our wisdom nor our learning, neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country. It measures everything, in short, except that which makes life worthwhile."

–Senator Robert F. Kennedy, 1968

"If you cut a tree the GDP goes up. But if you preserve the tree, the GDP does not grow. Now you have to decide whether you need the tree or the GDP."

-Devinder Sharma, New Delhi

In our educational institutions

Colleges/Universities

- St. Mary's University
- College of Mt. St. Vincent
- College of St. Elizabeth
- Seton Hill University
- Mt. St. Joseph University

Multiple Secondary/Elementary Schools

Ecoliteracy

"In the coming decades, the survival of humanity will depend on our ecological literacy — our ability to understand the basic principles of ecology and to live accordingly. This means that ecoliteracy must become a critical skill... and should be the most important part of education at all levels..."

— Fritjof Capra, PhD

- Is sustainability education an integral part of every school's curricula and culture, from kindergarten through university level?
- Is the approach comprehensive, engaging students, teachers and administrators, parents, communities and businesses?

"Once students grasp the connections between a stable economy, a healthy environment and equitable social systems, and their role as global citizens, they are successfully launched into an already more sustainable world — a world that they are empowered to protect and enjoy."

In our work with those who live in poverty

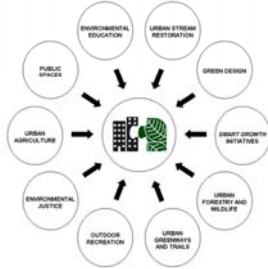


You cannot protect the environment unless you empower people, you inform them, and you help them understand that these resources are their own, that they must protect them.

— Professor Wangari Maathai

- How are we empowering people to think and speak for themselves?
- Are we giving people the tools needed to lift themselves out of poverty?
- Are we educating people about sustainability issues in the work we do in housing?
- Are we offering information about, and materials for, container gardens?
- Are we working with people at the local level to reclaim green spaces and garden plots?

- Are we educating ourselves about urban ecology?



The periodic table of the elements of urban restoration

- Cm – Keep the whole city in mind
- Ff – Find what you're FOR
- Mm – Make a mark
- Up – Unpuzzle the fractured space
- Sr – Strengthen the region
- Us – Unslum all neighborhoods
- Ss – Show solidarity with all life
- Mp – Create meaningful places
- Cb – Celebrate your accomplishments



-Mindy Thompson Fullilove, M.D.

Spirituality and Sustainability

"What could change the direction of today's civilization? It is my deep conviction that the only option is a change in the sphere of the spirit, in the human conscience. It's not enough to invent new machines, new regulations, new institutions. We must develop a new understanding of the true purpose of our existence on the Earth. Only by making such a fundamental shift will we be able to create new models of behavior and a new set of values for the planet.

-Vaclav Havel

Aroha:
It's All Connected



"We are stumbling blindly through a spiritual darkness while toying with the precarious secrets of life and death. The world has achieved brilliance without wisdom, power without conscience. Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants. We know more about war than we know about peace, more about killing than living." – General Omar Bradley



In the words of Brother Wayne Teasdale:



"We are rapidly entering the age of interspiritual community."



This new axial period will be characterized by the emergence of a profound sense of community among the world's religions and spiritual traditions.



In this age we will gain access to the treasures hidden *in the depths of our own* and other traditions of spirituality.



These resources have the power to transform our attitudes and behavior toward one another, other species and the Earth itself.



They will lead us into awareness of our larger communion with this sacred reality that is home for us all."



A critical question is...

What binds people of good will together?



Compassion is at the heart of all religious traditions.



Thomas Merton wrote:

"Compassion is the keen awareness of the interdependence of all things."



"We can reject everything else: religion, ideology, all received wisdom. But we cannot escape the necessity of love and compassion. This, then, is my true religion, my simple faith...Our own heart, our own mind, is the temple. The doctrine is compassion." -The Dalai Lama



The Buddha said: "Fill your mind with compassion."

Sunyata means the complete interrelatedness of all beings, and compassion flows from this intuition of interrelatedness.



The Qur'an says that "Allah is Compassionate and Merciful".
To follow Allah is to follow a way of Compassion.



Belief is not a theology in the head, it is action toward our neighbor.



In the Jewish Scriptures it says "YHWH is a God of tenderness and compassion, slow to anger, rich in kindness and faithfulness"



"God's compassion is over all that he has made."

Psalms 145

Compassion is not about pity, but about justice and action.



According to the Hindu Vedas, "The Path of Action is as important as the Path of Knowledge." Gandhi elaborates, "The only way to find God is to see him in his creation and be one with it."



"Be compassionate as your Creator in heaven is compassionate." -Jesus

"I was hungry and you gave me food..."



A key concept in African religion is *Maat*, which is "the influence of right and righteousness, justice and harmony, balance, respect, and human dignity."

"My neighbor and I have the same origins;
We have the same life-experience and a common destiny;
We are the obverse and reverse sides of one entity;
We are unchanging equals;
We are the faces which see themselves in each other...
My neighbors sorrow is my sorrow;
His joy is my joy.
He and I are mutually fulfilled when we stand by each other
in moments of need.
His survival is a precondition of my survival." -Zulu Declaration



Indigenous teachings remind us that "what we do to the earth, we do to ourselves; what we do to each other, we do to the earth. We'll have peace with the earth only when we have peace with each other ...And we'll have peace with each other only when we have justice."



Aroha in a person is an all encompassing quality of goodness, expressed by love for people, land, birds and animals, fish and all living things.



In order to feel aroha, one must recognize that people are not the center of the universe and that all life is interconnected.



Aroha is a way of being, not a way of doing.



Ban Ki-moon to Religious Leaders



"We have know-how, we have resources, but only largely lacking is political will. You can inspire, you can provoke, you can challenge your political leaders, through your wisdom, through your power, through your followers. Together let us walk a more sustainable path, one that respects our planet, and provides a safer, healthier, more equitable future for all of us."

"A spiritual revolution is needed if we're going to confront the environmental challenges that confront us." - Thich Nhat Hanh



- Plan a prayer service with an environmental theme; hold it outdoors, if possible.
- Invite others in the local civic community to pray with you.
- Host an interfaith gathering to discuss environmental concerns in your city; invite members of different traditions to share what their faith tradition has to say about the environment.
- Host an interfaith prayer service.
- Support a member of your congregation to become a Green Faith fellow.

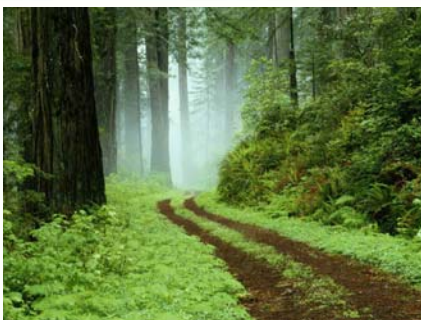
GreenFaith Fellowship Program



A comprehensive education and training program to turn clergy and laity from multiple religious traditions into environmental leaders.



Where Do We Go from Here?



"If a women's religious congregation committed to the saving of the natural world was unthinkable in former centuries, it is now unthinkable that any women's congregation should not be committed as a primary concern and purpose to the saving of the natural world." -Thomas Berry

A Parable...



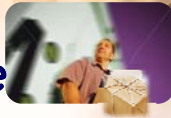
THE MOUSE TRAP



A **Mouse** looked through the crack in the wall.



And saw the farmer and his wife open a package.



What food might this contain? The **mouse** wondered – he was devastated to discover it was a mousetrap.



Retreating to the farmyard, the **mouse** proclaimed the warning :

There is a mousetrap in the house! There is a mousetrap in the house!





The chicken clucked and scratched, raised her head and said, “

Mr. **Mouse**, I can tell this is a grave concern to you, but it is of no consequence to me. I cannot be bothered by it.”




The **mouse** turned to the pig and told him, "There is a mousetrap in the house! There is a mousetrap in the house!"





The pig sympathized, but said, I am so very sorry, Mr. **Mouse**, but there is nothing I can do about it but pray. Be assured you are in my prayers."

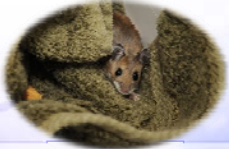
The mouse turned to the cow and said "There is a mousetrap in the house! There is a mousetrap in the house!"





The cow said, "Wow, Mr. **Mouse**. I'm sorry for you, but it's no skin off my nose."




So, the **mouse** returned to the house, head down and dejected, to face the farmer's mousetrap alone.




That very night a sound was heard throughout the house -- like the sound of a mousetrap catching its prey.

The farmer's wife rushed to see what was caught. In the darkness, she did not see it was a venomous snake whose tail the trap had caught.



The snake bit the farmer's wife. The farmer rushed her to the hospital, and she returned home with a fever.

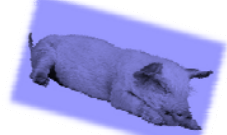




Everyone knows
you treat a fever with
fresh chicken soup,
so the farmer took his hatchet
to the farmyard for
the soup's main ingredient.



But his wife's sickness continued, so
friends and neighbors came
to sit with her around the clock.



To feed them, the farmer butchered the pig.

The farmer's wife did not get well; she died.



So many people came for her funeral,
the farmer had the cow slaughtered
to provide enough meat for all of them.

The mouse looked upon it all from his crack
in the wall with great sadness.

So, the next time you hear someone is facing
a problem and think it doesn't concern you,
remember – when one of us is threatened,
we are all at risk.



*“Do what’s
right in
front of
you.”*



