



JUST ACT APRIL 2009



"Itinerant Dominican women, committed to collaboration, link their energy, resources, and personnel to preach the gospel."



Dates to Observe with Prayer and Action during April

April 4	Martin Luther King, Jr. d. 1968
April 7	World Health Day
April 12	Easter
April 22	International Earth Day
April 25	Arbor Day
April 29	Catherine of Siena
April 30	Vietnam War ends, 1975

SPIRITUALITY PERSPECTIVE

"We need to appreciate all over again that Earth is a sacrament, vivified by the living Spirit of God. We need to realize that the way we are destroying it is tantamount to a sacrilege. And we need to act as members of the Earth community called to be partners with God in the ongoing creation rather than destruction of the world. This moment of crisis calls for a spirituality and ethics that will empower us to live in the web of life as sustainers rather than destroyers of the world." (Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ from *Passion for God, Passion for the Earth*, p. 124-125)



SUSTAINABILITY FOR ALL

Bottled Water - "Don't be a sap, drink from the tap."

Bottled water is not safer to drink than tap water. Recent testing showed that 10 major bottled brands of water contained a mixture of 38 different pollutants, including fertilizer, bacteria, Tylenol, and industrial chemicals. (Environmental Working Group)

The rate of bottled water demand is slowing but still growing. Americans drink an average of 29.3 gallons per year.

Approximately 1.5 million gallons of oil a year are used to make plastic water bottles. Transporting these bottles adds thousands of more gallons of oil, all of which significantly adds to greenhouse gas emissions.

Bottles are made from recyclable plastic but 90% of them end up in

parks and fields, along roadways, or in landfills (where it takes 1000s of years to break down). Many that are recycled end up being shipped to China.

Bottled water is 1000 times more out-of-pocket costly than tap water. Per gallon: Tap water averages \$.0015; filtered \$.13, bottled \$1.27.

Bottled water is part of the larger issue of privatization, the move to make water a commodity rather than recognizing it as a right.

Fall issue of UGA Research: *Fueling The Future of Bio-Energy*

www.researchmagazine.uga.edu
u www.organicconsumers.org - type ethanol in the search box

Birthdays of Women on Death Row

April 11	Melanie Anderson is on death row in North Carolina
April 30	Antoinette Frank is on death row in Louisiana

SCRIPTURAL THEOLOGICAL FOUNDINGS FOR CREATION AND US

By Roberta Miller, OP

Is there a connection between Creation and who God is? Does the care of Creation, the "Green Movement" to conserve, sustain and restore the elements of the natural world have a scriptural grounding?

We know from Genesis the stories of creation and how God found everything "very good". Who has not seen the bright crescent moon hanging in the early dawn darkness? Or been awed at the breaking forth of spring buds? Many of us marvel at human inventiveness in material things ranging from energy devices to computers. Yet God made humans in God's image and likeness. Does not our imaginative creativity reflect God's?

Over time a dichotomy developed between humans and nature which stemmed from a human centered interpretation of that passage in Genesis in which God told the first humans to reproduce and to subdue the earth by having power over all created living beings. The world became a hierarchy in which humans were God's agents on earth, the only creatures with salvation. Today with new insights into science, the process of evolution and new biblical criticism, our domination is giving way to a realization of our mutual earth-human interconnectedness.

The Scriptures are God-centered; it is in God that the origin and ultimate meaning of all creatures is found. As God forms the first human from the dirt of the earth, humans belong to the earth and are bound to it and to all the other creatures that inhabit it. A relationship of mutuality is established. When God tells the man to name each animal and bird he sees, relationships are established.

We find throughout the Old Testament from the psalms to Job and through the prophets that God's presence urges a respectful awareness for our interdependent human/nature relationship.

The prayers of the Easter Vigil reinforce this image. The Easter Vigil begins with the Exsultet: Exalt, all creation ... Rejoice O Earth, in shining splendor... Christ has conquered the [forces of death]. We enter into the life-death-Resurrection cycle. Who is

God in the light of the Incarnation and Redemption? Catholics understand God to be a Trinitarian community. Thus God's very being is relational. The God-Creation-human relationship is in a circle of mutuality drawn by God's own Spirit. The Spirit refers to God present and active in our world as "the Lord and Giver of Life." Consequently, from the very beginning of time, the world becomes the place of God's vivifying presence, the dynamic power at the heart of the world and its evolution.

God's creative activity continues as a work of redemption. For in the risen Jesus, a piece of this earth, real to the core, is now forever with God in glory.

In [Jesus] were created all things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible... and in him all things hold together. (Col. 1:15-17)

We are called to remember God's relationship to our world: Nature is to be respected as God's creation. The reconciling work of Jesus Christ, who died and rose from the dead, is not only for the sake of humanity, but also for "all things, whether on heaven or earth." Thus creation and redemption join in the call for ecological responsibility.

Human actions that destroy forests, pollute air, water and soil, and lead to the extinction of species, erase unique manifestations of God's goodness and 'Being'. The Sacramental system grounded in the visible elements of water, oil, grain and wine points to God's inherent presence in our lives, in our world. Consequently, we are challenged to recognize the relationship between our sacramental life and Earth's well-being. To allow Earth to be exploited for power, energy and money diminishes the visible presence of the 'grandeur of God.'

Resources:

Genesis: 1, 2, 9

Anne M. Clifford, *CSJ Foundations for a Catholic Ecological Theology of God in And God Saw It Was Good*. USCCB, 1996

Pope John Paul II *World Day of Peace 1990*

Denis Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart of Faith*, 2006

Elizabeth Johnson, *Passion of God, Passion for Earth in Spiritual Questions for the 21st Century*, 2001.

