

Mercy MOMENTS



Truly, much can be done!

Ten Green Commandments #1 – Take Care of Our Common Home in Peril

We are living at a time in history when we are not only seeing the widespread destruction of the Earth but also experiencing the effects of this tragedy. We know that our climate is heating, storms are more ferocious, fires and floods frequent. We all know that our common home is in peril.

In *Laudato Si'* Pope Francis calls for action for our world in peril:

“Our home is falling into serious disrepair... We can see signs that things are now reaching a breaking point, due to the rapid pace of change and degradation” (61).

He begins by posing the question “what is happening to our common home?” He follows this with another more serious one, what is “troubling us today and which we can no longer sweep under the carpet” (19).

Pope Francis explains that the human impact on the environment persists because we choose to be complacent, remain indifferent and to simply carry on as we always have. Indeed, this environmental crisis is not new to us. The “awareness of the precarious state of our home planet began more than 50 years ago, precisely with the problem of pollution ... Human activities, modern industrial

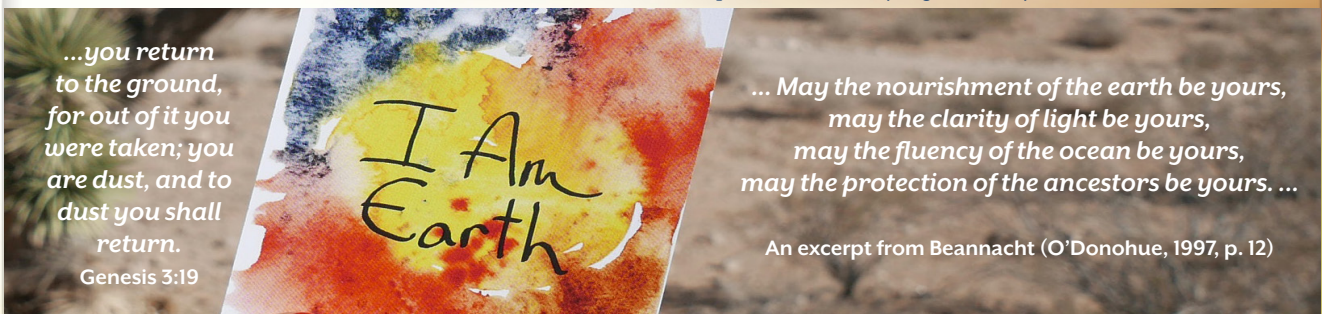
and agricultural activities in particular, appear to have polluted almost all areas of our common home: the air, the land and the waters” (Kureethadam, 2019, pp. 27,28).

It is clear as Pope Francis asserts that, “if present trends continue, this century may well witness extraordinary climate change and an unprecedented destruction of ecosystems, with serious consequences for us all” (24).

We have “devastated wooded plains and valleys, polluted the waters, deformed the Earth’s habitat, made the air unbreathable, upset the hydrogeological and atmospheric systems, blighted green spaces, implemented uncontrolled forms of industrialization, humiliating the Earth, that flowerbed that is our dwelling” (Pope John Paul II, 1 January 1990).

The first green commandment insists that we wake up. This is not something of the future. The time for action is now. We are called not just to acknowledge but to ‘care’, to act, to speak out against the forces that are destroying our planet.

As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of Earth Day (22 April 2020) let’s re-establish right relationships and utilise the creativity and responsibility given to us to “seize the enormous opportunities of a zero-carbon future.”
<https://www.earthday.org/earth-day-2020/>



REFLECTION

- > Do you have an environmental advocate in your ministry? Could you form a “green team” at your office to find cost-effective ways to conserve resources and promote sustainability?
- > Due to the Covid-19 pandemic we are finding new ways to meet and share with colleagues as well as our friends and family. When we choose to videoconference instead of traveling we are lessening our personal carbon footprint. Does meeting this way work in your ministry? Could you choose to use it more often in the future?

REFERENCES

1. Kureethadam, JI. (2019). *The Ten Green Commandments of Laudato Si'*. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press.
2. O'Donohue, J. (1997). *Anam Cara: Spiritual Wisdom from the Celtic World*. London: Transworld Publishers Ltd.
3. www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

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