

Birds by M. Honors

Living Simply in a Consumer Society~ Seeds for Reflection

Humility means that we are open to wisdom, to life lessons... Can we return to experience Earth as our primary teacher? Jesus learned many of his lessons from Earth. For example, in the parable of the fig tree (Mt. 24:32), Jesus said: "Let the fig tree teach you a lesson..." **What important life wisdom have you learned from nature?**

Living in freedom is the essence of being human. The highest freedom we can enjoy is freedom from the tyranny of our own wants. Jesus says that the birds and the grasses of the field really get it – being is their living and being means living free from anxiety. **How is it possible for humans to live like that? Is it?**

Pope Francis points out that many times being distant from problems, not really encountering the people or ecosystems that are so impacted can lead to a numbing of conscience [49] **How do we raise our consciousness? How do we listen to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor?**

Many times, we evade the issues by looking at Earth's problems superficially and then carrying on our self-destructive vices; trying not to see them, trying not to acknowledge them, delaying the important decisions and pretending that nothing will happen. [59] **How do we stand as witnesses not only to the destruction, but also to what is possible when we live a simple lifestyle? What are some of your struggles as you try to live differently in our consumer society?**

"The extravagant gesture is the very stuff of creation. After the one extravagant gesture of creation in the first place, the universe has continued to deal exclusively in extravagances...the whole show has been on fire from the word go!" (Annie Dillard). **Take time to consider one of Earth's extravagant gestures that delights you.**

The Holy Father quotes Ali Al-Khawwas, a Sufi writer in saying, “The universe unfolds in God, who fills it completely. Hence, there is a mystical meaning to be found in a leaf, in a mountain trail, in a dewdrop, in a poor person’s face.” [233] The mystical meaning of creation can only be found in Sabbath time: time to be, time for silence. **How do you honor Sabbath, which is a gift to all creation?**

Play is amazement made visible—expressed in joy and abandon. Entering into play brings us to the place of the child, the simplicity of losing ourselves, of ecstasy- being taken out of ourselves into delight, into the moment. Playing is dancing, frolicking in what gives us deep joy. It is more profound than amusement or entertainment.

“Play is the highest form of research.” ~ Albert Einstein

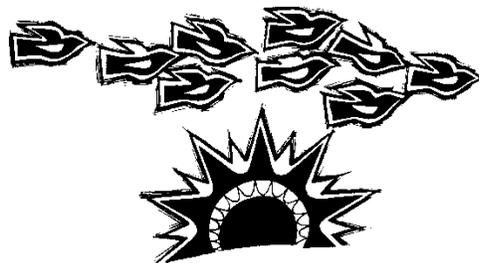
Life is playfulness...We need to play so that we can rediscover the magic all around us.” ~ F Colao

“This is the real secret of life—to be completely engaged with what you are doing in the here and now. And instead of calling it work, realize it is play.” ~ Alan W. Watts

What is your favorite mode of play?

Our existence, not our possessions fills us with deep gratitude, with a thankfulness that bubbles up from the **bliss of being**. It is gratitude that turns us away from the frenetic pace of buying and amassing things. It is gratitude that opens our hearts, minds and spirit to perceive the marvels of living and to say, “This is so much more than enough, thank you!” **Pause and reflect on your top five reasons for gratitude. Share one.**

May our struggles and our concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope. [244]



Bird and Sun by M. Honors, CSJ