



Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet

Prayer Journal

2023

INTRODUCTION

We invite you to use this prayer journal to explore the spiritual call to ecological conversion. Inside, you will find prayers, a short communal prayer service, inspirational quotes, reflections and suggested questions for you to ponder. May this prayer journal help you go deeper, journey farther, and respond boldly and creatively to the call to care for creation.



The Web

Humankind has not woven the web of life.
We are but one thread within it.
Whatever we do to the web, we do it to
ourselves.
All things are bound together.
All things connect.

Chief Seattle, 1854



“Everyone’s talents
and involvement are
needed.”

Laudato Si’, 14

MY ECO CONVERSION: A LITANY OF LOVE AFFAIRS

by Celia DuRea, CSJ

For many years, up into my mid-sixties, the question that kept coming to my mind was, “What am I supposed to be when I grow up?” Next, I found myself not wanting to read spiritual books, or even The Bible. I continued reading and reflecting on the Gospels. I felt a need to learn how to think for myself, and reading the thoughts of others was not helpful.

A friend told me about contemplative and centering prayer, which I began practicing. Shortly after, I picked up *Psalms for Praying: An Invitation to Wholeness* by Nan Merrill. The word “wholeness” stood out. Yes, I yearned to be not only *whole* but *holy* as well! The translation of the Psalms, the inclusive language, Creation described with such earthiness, was speaking to my heart, and God became...*my beloved*.

I was enamored with these words in our Consensus Statement: “we move always toward profound love of God and love of neighbor without distinction.” My desire to serve “my dear neighbor,” which includes everything in this cosmos, became my ministry, opening my heart to the importance of each moment. To see with the eyes of the heart, to hear with the ears of the Divine grows more intimate through each moment. Reading the Gospel with the new understanding that I can read between the lines, brings Jesus and his ministry more alive and personal. Could this be another “love affair?” I hope so!

Then the love affairs grew real, happening so often it sometimes took my breath

away, brought tears of joy, sadness, fullness or filled my body with fire.

I was waiting in line at the grocery store and noticed a box of truffles in the person’s basket behind me. I looked at him, pointed to the box and asked, “Ohhhh, you like those truffles?” “You bet I do!” “So do I!” and he gave me a big smile. We introduced ourselves and mentioned how happy we were to meet each other.

Since that moment, I have become a very extroverted introvert. I especially express my gratitude to those who clean the floors or do the re-shelving, telling them that without their presence we would have a big mess and that their work is most important. I introduce myself and ask their name. Yes, how very important is their name.

I chatter with the squirrels, talk to the trees and flowers—even to the roses whose petals are browning, thanking them for gifting this creation with their beauty. ...to the Garden Snail, carrying its brown and gold spiral shell, tentacles stretched forward, the soft body leaving behind a trail. ...to the mockingbirds, unable to protect their nests from invading crows, who eat the eggs, or fly off with babies to feed their own hatchlings. My heart cries for the mockingbirds. This is survival, but still it hurts. ...hums of the honeybees, gathering pollen and nectar from the red blossoms of a flaming eucalyptus tree.



COMMUNAL PRAYER SERVICE

Originally written in Spanish by Fr. Lluc Torcal, O Cist., Procurator General of the Cistercian Order, Spain.
From *The Laudato Si' Prayer Book*

Psalm 43:1-5

Grant me justice, O God; defend me from
a faithless people; from the deceitful
and unjust rescue me.

You, O God, are my strength. Why then
do You spurn me? Why must I go
about mourning, with the enemy
oppressing me?

Send Your light and Your fidelity, that
they may be my guide; Let them bring
me to Your holy mountain, to the place
of Your dwelling,

That I may come to the altar of God, to
God, my joy, my delight. Then I will
praise You with the harp, O God, my
God.

Why are you downcast, my soul? Why do
you groan within me? Wait for God,
for I shall again praise him, my savior
and my God.

1 John 1:5-7

Now this is the message that we have
heard from Him and proclaim to you: God
is light, and in Him there is no darkness at
all. If we say, "We have fellowship with
Him," while we continue to walk in
darkness, we lie and do not act in truth.
But if we walk in the light as He is in the
light, then we have fellowship with one
another, and the blood of his Son Jesus
cleanses us from all sin.

Reading from *Laudato Si'*

There is a nobility in the duty to care for
creation through little daily actions, and it
is wonderful how education can bring
about real changes in lifestyle. Education

in environmental responsibility can
encourage ways of acting which directly
and significantly affect the world around
us, such as avoiding the use of plastic and
paper, reducing water consumption,
separating refuse, cooking only what can
reasonably be consumed, showing care for
other living beings, using public transport
or car-pooling, planting trees, turning off
unnecessary lights, or any number of other
practices. All of these reflect a generous
and worthy creativity which brings out the
best in human beings.

Reflection

Conversion is not real nor true if it does
not have a direct impact on the care for
our world. This impact is based on small
actions that, multiplied by the constancy
and conviction of many people, are
capable of generating great changes. And
these small actions, such as turning off an
unnecessary light, are not very difficult to
carry out. It is enough to start with one of
them: then, the force of habit will make us
acquire the practice and these actions will
be carried out naturally and will increase in
number, intensity and effectiveness.

Petition

God of goodness, as the day is setting,
send your light so that transformed by it
we may serve our brothers and sisters and
the earth that welcomes us, offering
ourselves to their full service through small
daily actions capable of having an effective
impact on them. We ask this through
Christ our Lord. Amen.



“Despite current ads and slogans, the world doesn’t change one person at a time. It changes when networks of relationships form among people who share a common cause and vision of what’s possible. This is good news for those of us intent on creating a positive future. Rather than worry about critical mass, our work is to foster critical connections. We don’t need to convince large numbers of people to change; instead we need to connect with kindred spirits. Through these relationships. We will develop the new knowledge, practices, courage and commitment that lead to broad-based change.”

Margaret Wheatley

ECOLOGICAL CONVERSION

by Patty Johnson, CSJ

Three years ago, I began to seriously explore what Pope Francis was talking about in *Laudato Si'* regarding ecological conversion.

Initially, I began making changes such as replacing many personal care and household cleaning items with those that did not have plastic and were healthier for the environment. These practices multiplied as time went on and my budget would allow. That led to thinking more about the clothes I wear and the food I eat, which are more difficult changes for me to make. All of these things I am swapping out means that almost hourly, I am reminded of my commitment to Earth's sustainability as I touch my cotton handkerchief, use my sustainable lip balm, or choose my food. I have been able to maintain these choices because I recognize how others are harmed by my unsustainable actions.

I attended useful webinars that helped me see more clearly the intersectionality of climate change with poverty, forced migration and racism. Climate change, biodiversity extinction, and plastic pollution are leading us to a mass extinction that may make this planet uninhabitable for humankind for the foreseeable future. It wasn't that I didn't know these things before, it's just that now this ecological conversion process seemed to increase the urgency and priority it takes in my life.

Each action I take, whether it is a personal choice or an action for justice, reinforces

my overall commitment and conversion. My little changes and choices are not enough to turn around the current trajectory towards planetary destruction. However, they have moved me to prioritize acting for change. I recognize that time is short and the change must occur at the international, national and local government levels as well as at the personal level. We need to engage multinational companies. Unless we limit global warming, end plastic pollution—especially in our oceans and waterways—and stop species extinction by the mid-century or earlier, life on this planet will be very different. Those who will suffer the most will be the poor, but none of us will be exempt.

When I bought my first shampoo and conditioner bars (like a soap bar with no plastic in the product or its packaging), I did not know that it would lead me to make so many different choices for our environment. I know that these environmental issues are complex, and I don't have the background to become an expert or learn enough about all the science that addresses them. However, I know there are good partners who do know the science, know the actions we need to take, and the urgency of doing it now. My ongoing ecological conversion helps me to make personal changes in my behavior. However, I now see that my primary task is to amplify the voices of these experts so that more of us together can achieve the needed systemic reforms to save our planet.





“As consumers, we have so much power to change the world by just being careful in what we buy.”

Emma Watson



“The Environment is where we all meet; where we all have a mutual interest; it is the one thing all of us share.”

Lady Bird Johnson

