

Our Common Home

SESSION 2: Environmental Justice

Spiritual Reflection

Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth. (92)

Ethical reflection

Economic powers continue to justify the current global system where priority tends to be given to speculation and the pursuit of financial gain, which fail to take the context into account, let alone the effects on human dignity and the natural environment. (56)

Obsession with a consumerist lifestyle, above all when few people are capable of maintaining it, can only lead to violence and mutual destruction. (205)

Call to Action

Yet we can once more broaden our vision. We have the freedom needed to limit and direct technology; we can put it at the service of another type of progress, one which is healthier, more human, more social, more integral. (112)

A Prayer for Our Earth

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists. Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty. Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one. O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes.

Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction. Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth. Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light. We thank you for being with us each day. Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.
~ POPE FRANCIS



Franciscan Action Network
Transforming the World in the Spirit of St. Francis and St. Clare



ACTIONS

Resources and Reading Materials

- **Environmental Justice in Maryland**, September 2015, by the University of Maryland Environmental Law Clinic.
- **Grassroots Mojo: Bridging Yesterday with Today**, Fred Tutman, EPA Blog. <<https://blog.epa.gov/log/2015/03/28461/>>
- **Why Green is not the New Black or Brown**, Fred Tutman, 2011. <<http://www.bayjournalnewsservice.com/article.php?artnum=220>>
- **Just Water: Theology, Ethics, and the Global Water Crisis**, Christiana Z. Peppard, Orbis Books, 2014.
- Annie Leonard's film, **The Story of Stuff – Environmental Justice Vol. 1**
- **Toxic Waste and Race**, 1987, by the Racial Justice Commission of the United Church of Christ
- **Toxic Waste and Race at 20**, 2007, by the Racial Justice Commission of the United Church of Christ
- **Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake: Online resources** – Additional reading materials, Bible studies, statements from many religious denominations

Living Witness

Positive changes in your daily living that will serve as a living witness to those around you

- **Do you need all that stuff?** Think about your consumerism. What changes can you make? What is a necessity and what are luxuries that are silently oppressing our poor brothers and sisters here in Maryland and globally?
- **Challenge yourself** to divest from fossil fuels as a personal commitment to reverse climate change. Check out Divest Invest online
- **Vote:** make creation care a top priority in every election. Check out the League of Conservation Voters' Scorecard
- **New Environmental Justice legislation** will be coming up in the Maryland state legislature. Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake will be following it closely and updating the Advocacy page on our website. Follow along with us to stay informed.

Community Engagement

Working together will speed up positive change

- Get involved with an organization called **We Act for Environmental Justice**, based in New York with an office in DC.
- **Lead discussions** at your congregation about this issue, or organize a movie night. Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake can help you find speakers, movies, and discussion prompters.
- **Tree plantings** – IPC's Trees for Sacred Spaces Program hosts tree plantings throughout Maryland. Trees heal the Earth and communities. Convince YOUR faith community to host its own tree planting. Contact bonnie@interfaithchesapeake.org.
- **River cleanups** – 28th Annual Potomac River Watershed Cleanup (April 16, 2016); Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay Project Clean Stream (year-round)
- **Volunteer with IPC** and help lead future kayaking trips, outreach to your faith community, or engage in our work. Contact Jodi Rose at jodi@interfaithchesapeake.org
- **Looking for more ideas?** Check out IPC's Menu for Action for hundreds of ways to help heal the Earth!
- **Earth Forum of Howard County** hosting Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II, Director of the Office of Public Witness, *In Search of the Common Good and a Better Climate for Everyone*. November 14th.