

Ruah Pastoral Centre, Open 10-12 Mon-Fri. Phone: 4947303, feel free to leave a message or email ballyroanparish@gmail.com

In these hot summer days, we try to take a breather from our daily work so we can move at a slower pace and get in touch with the beauty of the world around us. We try to leave the frenzy of our active lives and move into the realm of restful appreciation of our earthly home. It is a graced time when families make an attempt to spend time together, enjoying the simple pleasures of the beach or a hike in the woods or exploring the wonders in state parks or amazing desert canyons carved out by wind and water over time.

Taking a vacation or a time away or some days of spiritual retreat can offer us the pause that refreshes so we can contemplate the gift of our earthly home and our own way of being in this home. A chance to see the stars, away from glaring city lights, can remind a person of the vast universe in which we dwell and the presence of the Divine in the starry landscape not made by hands. Taking time for retreat can awaken our bodily senses so we can see with our own eyes, the hand of the Creator at work even now, labouring to bring creation to fulfilment. In such a setting, we can descend into ourselves and meet the Holy One at work within, tapping into the love of God flowing through us and throughout the entire universe. The Risen Christ is alive, pulsating with loving energy, bringing all creation into oneness, all creatures large and small. The heartbeat of God in Christ is reverberating in every part of the world – for those who have ears to hear we bow in wonder and reverence.

Yet our common home is in crisis, as Pope Francis has written in his Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si*. Our Mother Earth “now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she ‘groans in travail’ (Rom 8:22).” (2)

In a way, we have forgotten who we are, that we are made up of stardust and that we have an obligation to care for our common home, our beautiful blue planet. Pope Francis is challenging the whole human community to pull together to find ways to curb the destruction and to care for our common home. We are all called to begin a new dialogue about the environmental crisis. His plea is leading a worldwide ecological movement when he says, “Everyone’s talents and involvement are needed to redress the damage caused by human abuse of God’s creation.” (14)

Perhaps a first step is to become aware of the ecological crisis by reading Pope Francis’ encyclical letter. In Chapter One he speaks of Pollution and Climate Change. In my 20 years as a missionary in the Bougainville Diocese of Papua New Guinea, we ministered on the far flung islands called Carterets. Now they are submerged by the rising waters and all the people had to migrate 90 miles south to the island of Bougainville. Their island home of their ancestors is no more. How many other Pacific islands or coastlines around the world are being taken by the rising waters?

May we pause to consider what is happening to our environment and work to find ways to help restore the beautiful home that earth is destined to become. When Jesus of Nazareth walked this earth, he “lived in harmony with creation, and others were amazed: ‘What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?’ (Mt 8:27)” (98) May we, as followers of Jesus and members of the human community, appreciate our common home and offer her the care and protection she deserves.

Mass Intentions

Saturday 7.00: Hugh and Robert Proctor (A) and Philip Cairns (Snr and Jnr); Sunday 10.00: Mary Corrigan (A); 12.00: Mary Mosley Parks (Month’s Mind); Monday 10.00: Thanksgiving Mass from Dobbs family; Tues. 10.00: Eleanor Callan (A), Wednesday 10 Speedy recovery from illness, Thursday 10 Speedy recovery from illness.

Anniversaries: John Byrne, Eleanor Callan & John Byrne, **Recently Deceased:** Mark MacDermott