

March 15, 2009

Reflection from John Surette, SJ

All temples are holy places (John 2:13-16)

“Jesus went up to Jerusalem. He found in the temple area those who sold oxen, sheep, and doves, as well as the moneychangers...and he said: Stop making my Father’s house into a marketplace!”

We all know that we are temples of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit blows through our souls, stirs up the dust there, with the result that things can never be the same again for us.

Let us expand our knowing to the entire human community. It too is a temple. The Divine Spirit blows through every country, every race of people, every ethnic group, every religion, and every economic class.

Let us expand our knowing even further to include planet Earth. The Spirit hovers over the mountains and the forests, the wetlands and the deserts, the cities and the prairies. She blows within every life form including bacteria and birds, plants and reptiles, chimpanzees and us humans. Earth is a temple within which the Spirit dwells and is at work.



Can we, in our religious imaginations, hear Jesus saying that we need to stop making Earth into a marketplace and to stop making everything into a commodity?

For example, health care once was seen as a humanitarian service offered to the sick. Now it has become a product

The Well

*A Center for our
Sacred Unity with God,
Earth, and One
Another.*

1515 W. Ogden Ave.
LaGrange Park, IL 60526
www.csjthewell.org
thewell@csjoseph.org

sold mainly to those who can afford to consume it. Health care has been commodified.

For example, clean water for cooking and drinking was once seen as a universal basic human right to be made available to all at little or no cost. In recent years there has been a trend spreading around the planet where multinational corporations are taking over the management of municipal water supplies, relieving the cash-strapped municipalities of this burden, and looking forward to increased profits for themselves by charging ever higher prices for the water. These prices, of course, will be beyond the reach of the poor to pay.

Can we, in our religious imaginations, hear Jesus saying that we need to stop making Earth into a war zone and to stop choosing death rather than life?

For example, consider all of the wars that our country has fought during the lifetimes of many of us here today. These are World War Two followed by the wars in Korea, Vietnam, Grenada, Panama, Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq.

I choose to use the word “war” in this listing rather than those sweeter sounding phrases like “conflict” and “intervention” and “military action.” Is it not difficult to think about the history of our country and not use all of these wars as reference points?

Can we, in our religious imaginations, hear Jesus saying that we need to stop making Earth into a wasteland and to stop changing our garden planet into a toxic dump?

For example, we are releasing toxins into the atmosphere. Our children, with their rapid rate of respiration, are breathing in that air with the result that

asthma and other respiratory diseases have reached an all time high among them.

For example, we are sprinkling poisons into the soils that grow our food. Toxological studies of the food supply are few and far between. More and more children are experiencing the weakening of their immune systems and cancer that once was mainly an adult disease is now increasingly showing up in children as well.

Everything and everyone that enjoys the gift of existence is a temple where the Spirit blows. But so often we approach these temples with our shoes still on, without respect, without reverence, and with little or no awareness that they are holy.

Let us take off our shoes and approach with respect and with reverence... for all the temples are holy places!

The Well

*A Center for our
Sacred Unity with
God,
Earth, and One
Another.*

1515 W. Ogden Ave.
LaGrange Park, IL 60526
www.csjthewell.org
thewell@csjoseph.org