Pastor’s Corner

Laudato Si and Appalachia: My Experience of Death and New Life

Last month, I joined eleven others on a Maryknoll immersion trip to Appalachia. We traveled hundreds of miles through the rolling hills and mountains of Eastern Kentucky. I had never seen so many trees and so many different shades of green. A deep awareness of the beauty of nature shaped my thoughts for the week. Yes, I was struck by the awesomeness of God’s creation!

Our tasks were to observe, to reflect theoretically as a community on what we saw, and to return home and share with others. We experienced the coal country of Appalachia through the lens of Pope Francis’ encyclical letter, Laudato Si, On Care for our Common Home. One of the encyclical’s main themes is our interconnectedness, “that genuine care for our lives and our relationships with nature is inseparable from fraternity, justice and faithfulness to others (70).” I danced with thoughts about the beauty of nature and my relationship to it.

We visited some deep wounds – old coal strip-mining and mountain top removal sites. In these places, trees are removed, land is stripped bare and the topsoil pushed away. Dynamite explodes and after the coal is hauled off, mountain tops will have lost at least 300 feet in height and look like flat barren deserts. We also saw “orange water” in a creek on its way to larger streams and rivers. Orange water is contaminated by heavy metals as a direct result of the coal mining process. In some places like Deane, KY, it’s in the water supply.

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We learned that people who live in the coal regions of Appalachia have the highest rates of cancer in the entire United States. There is a direct link between coal extraction and cancer-causing deaths.

The destruction to the environment is unbelievable. Yet, environmental harm isn’t restricted to Appalachia. I think of Laudato Si and connect some dots: Of course, we pollute and abuse the environment – just look at how we treat each other! Pope Francis is correct: we can’t solve the environmental issues without first healing our own relationships.

We do need healing: Racism is alive. Sex sells. In public discourse, rarely do we listen to understand. Violence inflicts terror in the lives of the marginalized. Corporate greed wins. Comfort and convenience, consumerism and instant gratification all amplify our self-centeredness and restrict our ability to be good stewards and to care for God’s creation. There is a parallel between the way we treat each other and the way we treat nature.

I am struck by a recent weekday Mass reading from Jeremiah. To a devastated and exiled people, Jeremiah speaks the words of the Lord: “With age-old love I have loved you; so, I have kept my mercy toward you. Again I will restore you… Again you shall plant vineyards and those who plant shall enjoy the fruits (31: 4-5).” I think of our Christian identity, one where we are very much aware of moments of death and new life. Because of God’s love and mercy, death doesn’t have the final say. We always have hope. The path that we walk with Jesus is the path that leads through our brokenness to new life.

I see God at work in the midst of devastation. I see hope in Appalachia. We planted new chestnut trees on an old mountain top removal site. We did so together through a ritual of prayers and blessings. We planted new life on a barren landscape and took a step toward restoration. We also enjoyed the shade from a grove of pine trees planted just 14 years ago. Today these trees reach out to the sky - so much growth in just 14 years! Yes, the pine trees and the new chestnut trees are reminders of healing that an intentional community can participate in with nature.

As our group drove through Eastern Kentucky, we were introduced to people who live with purpose and meaning – folks who choose to stay off the power-grid and not be dependent on coal; a family that operates a commercial kitchen in a small town so that farmers have the means to cook or can their produce and sell it; an urban farmer who established a cooperative to help provide healthy food for the community. We visited a medical clinic for the uninsured. We spent time learning about a non-profit organization that works to restore confidence and dignity to women who have endured abusive relationships and difficult times. We toured a solar farm that uses 32,300 solar panels to generate enough energy for about 1,000 households - renewable energy in baby steps.

There is pain, suffering and tremendous struggle. Yet, the message is clear: It’s about planting one tree at a time. It’s the impact of one family, one farmer, one healed woman, one clinic, one solar panel. It’s each person making a choice to live with purpose and with the awareness of God, actively healing in our world. And this stuff is contagious. Faith spreads. People love and accept others and are liberated from causing harm. As this happens, the environment heals. This is the hope that Pope Francis tapped into when he penned Laudato Si. This is the joy of the Gospel. And this is what I took to share of my experience of Appalachia.

Matt Gray
Director of RCIA

“Though the mountains fall away and the hills be shaken, my love shall never fall away from you nor my covenant of peace be shaken says the Lord, who has mercy on you.”

- Isaiah 54:10
### MASS INTENTIONS

| SUNDAY | September 30  
|-------|-----------------|
| 8:00 AM | All Souls in Purgatory  
| 10:00 AM | Charles A. Berger  
| 12:00 PM | Richard Alvarado  

| MONDAY | October 1  
|-------|-----------------|
| 8:30 AM | Phil & Mary Ann Wagner  

| TUESDAY | October 2  
|-------|-----------------|
| 8:30 AM | Francesca Kelsey  

| WEDNESDAY | October 3  
|---------|-----------------|
| 8:30 AM | Maria Loretta Aragon  

| THURSDAY | October 4  
|--------|-----------------|
| 8:30 AM | Nelly Arnillas  

| FRIDAY | October 5  
|-------|-----------------|
| 8:30 AM | Francisco Carmen Madriaga  

| SATURDAY | October 6  
|---------|-----------------|
| 8:30 AM | James Ferenz, Jr.  
| 5:00 PM | For the People  

| SUNDAY | October 7  
|-------|-----------------|
| 8:00 AM | Raymond Cook  
| 10:00 AM | Eddy Halim  
| 12:00 PM | Virginia Trucios  

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

| SUNDAY | September 30  
|-------|-----------------|
| 10:00 AM | Children’s Liturgy of The Word  
| 4:00 PM | Confirmation Classes Year 1 & 2  

| MONDAY | October 1  
|-------|-----------------|
| 8:00 AM | Rosary  
| 7:00 PM | Hispanic Prayer Group  
| 7:00 PM | St. Vincent de Paul  

| TUESDAY | October 2  
|-------|-----------------|
| 8:00 AM | Rosary  
| 10:00 AM | Infant and Toddler Playgroup  
| 12:00 PM | Al-Anon Meeting  
| 7:00 PM | Adult Choir Rehearsal  
| 7:30 PM | AMP: Middle School Youth Group  

| WEDNESDAY | October 3  
|---------|-----------------|
| 8:00 AM | Rosary  

| THURSDAY | October 4  
|--------|-----------------|
| 8:00 AM | Knights of Columbus Officer’s Meeting  
| 6:00 PM | SPRED - Special Religious Education  

| FRIDAY | October 5  
|-------|-----------------|
| 8:00 AM | Rosary  
| 9:30 AM | Eucharistic Adoration  
| 11:00 AM | Al-Anon - Friday  
| 11:30 AM | Benediction  
| 6:00 PM | AA—Words of Wisdom  
| 6:00 PM | Hispanic Prayer Group  

| SATURDAY | October 6  
|---------|-----------------|
| 8:00 AM | Rosary  
| 8:15 AM | Al-Anon Saturday AM  
| 3:00 PM | Reconciliation  

| SUNDAY | October 7  
|-------|-----------------|
| 9:00 AM | Knights of Columbus Donut Social  
| 10:00 AM | Children’s Liturgy of The Word  
| 1:30 PM | Blessing of the Pets  

| SUNDAY | September 30  
|-------|-----------------|
| 9:00 AM | Children’s Liturgy of The Word  
| 10:15 AM | RCIA Inquiry  
| 11:00 AM | Children’s Liturgy of The Word  

| MONDAY | October 1  
|-------|-----------------|
| 12:10 PM | Rosary & Angelus  
| 12:45 PM | Eucharistic Adoration  
| 7:00 PM | Employment Connections  
| 7:30 PM | RCIA  

| TUESDAY | October 2  
|--------|-----------------|
| 12:10 PM | Rosary and Angelus  

| WEDNESDAY | October 3  
|----------|-----------------|
| 12:10 PM | Carroll O’Connor  
| 11:30 AM | Rosary & Angelus  
| 12:45 PM | Eucharistic Adoration  
| 5:00 PM | Children’s Choir Rehearsal  
| 5:30 PM | Legion of Mary  
| 7:00 PM | Teen Choir Rehearsal  

| THURSDAY | October 4  
|---------|-----------------|
| 12:10 PM | Rosary and Angelus  
| 11:30 AM | Social Justice/Outreach  
| 7:30 PM | Fall Grief Workshop Series  

| FRIDAY | October 5  
|-------|-----------------|
| 12:10 PM | Rosary and Angelus  

| SATURDAY | October 6  
|---------|-----------------|
| 9:00 AM | Children’s Liturgy of The Word  
| 9:00 AM | Knights of Columbus Donut Social  
| 10:00 AM | Confirmation Year 1 Retreat  
| 10:15 AM | RCIA Inquiry  
| 11:00 AM | Children’s Liturgy of The Word  

| SUNDAY | October 7  
|-------|-----------------|
| 9:00 AM | Children’s Liturgy of The Word  
| 9:00 AM | Knights of Columbus Donut Social  
| 10:00 AM | Confirmation Year 1 Retreat  
| 10:15 AM | RCIA Inquiry  
| 11:00 AM | Children’s Liturgy of The Word  

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Scripture Readings
October 7
Genesis 2:18-24
Hebrews 2:9-11
Mark 10:2-16 or 10:2-12

St. Vincent de Paul
Conference Update

The following is a recap of how we have helped our clients in the last 2 months with the last 5th Sunday funds the parish graciously provided our conference in July.

- Rent – 8 Assisted, $1,753 total paid.
- Grocery Gift Cards – 11 Assisted, $440 total paid.
- PG&E – 8 Assisted, $798 total paid.
- Motel Nights – 14 Assisted, 21 Days, $1,767 total paid.

We thank the parish for allowing us to assist those in our community most in-need and would ask next weekend you consider us again during the second collection for St Vincent de Paul.

Job Opening
Administrative Assistant
Dominican Sisters of Mission San Jose
43326 Mission Circle
Fremont, CA 94539

If you are interested or have any questions, please contact Patricia Boland, Director of Human Resources at www.msjdominicans.org.

Adult Confirmation

Adults interested in preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation, please contact Matt Gray at (925) 202-5425.

WINGS Annual Women’s Tea
Saturday, October 13, 2018
1:00 PM - 3:30 PM - St. Augustine Hall
$20.00 Suggested Donation

Invite a girlfriend and join us for a special afternoon! We are blessed to have Roberta Gonzales speak to us on how the Goodness and ‘Greatness of the Lord’ has allowed her to move forward in faith and confidence as an instrument of God’s love amongst the dire adversity of life, struggles and the deaths of loved ones. Space is limited. Tickets will go on sale after Masses starting September 22-23 or by emailing wings@catholicsofpleasanton.org.

1st Friday Eucharistic Adoration

Brothers and sisters in Christ, join us on the first Friday of the month at St. Augustine from 9:00 AM to 11:30 AM. Drop in for an hour or whatever time you have available. Eucharistic Adoration is a personal way of developing a deeper relationship with the Lord. Have a quiet time for prayers and meditations. Benediction follows Eucharistic Adoration.

ST. AUGUSTINE OFFICE HOURS
Monday - Friday: 8:00 AM - 8:30 PM
Saturday: Closed
Sunday: 8:00 AM - 2:00 PM

ST. ELIZABETH SETON OFFICE HOURS
Monday: 8:00 AM - 8:30 PM
Tuesday: 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Wednesday - Thursday: 8:00 AM - 8:30 PM
Friday: 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Saturday: Closed
Sunday: 2:00 PM - 8:00 AM

PRAYERS FOR THE DECEASED

| Thomas Gleason      | Manuel Rubio  |
| Maria Ledezma       | Lou Ann Trinca|
| Mark Nelson         | Erich Pokorny  |
| Michael Turpel      | Karen Bauer   |
| Bernadette Mignone  | Judy Jensen   |
| Jim DeMello         | Joy Tennison  |
| John Onate          | Frank Maicas  |
|                    | Eleanor Grabowski |

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK

| Jim Cronn           | Leonila de la Cruz |
| Randy Bartlett      | Sophi Flicker      |
| Sheila Buckley      | Teresa Grande      |
| Tony Sullins        | Juliet Blake       |
Stewardship of Treasure  
August 2018

August Sunday Plate Budget: $128,229  
August Sunday Plate Actual: $126,552  
% via On-line Giving: 29%  

YTD Sunday Plate Budget: $1,082,066  
YTD Sunday Plate Actual: $1,057,819  
% of Budget: 98%  

August Arise & Build Receipts: $60,079  
Total A&B Campaign Receipts: $3,407,969  
Total Receipts % of $3.6M Pledge: 95%  

Thank you for your Stewardship!

Click on the Giving tab of the CCOP Website to review the 2017 / 2018 Parish Financial Report

Requests for Mass Intentions
A wonderful way to honor and remember your loved ones is to offer a Mass intention. Please visit one of the offices in person to reserve Masses. The 2019 Mass Intention Calendars (January—June) will open for reservations on October 22, 2018 at:

St. Augustine Rectory Conference Room  
Monday – Friday 9:30 AM -12:00 PM  
Monday – Friday 4:30 PM – 8:00 PM

St. Elizabeth Seton Office  
Monday – Friday 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM  
Monday, Wednesday & Thursday 4:30 PM - 8:00 PM

Annual Kevin Gourley Memorial “Tootsie Roll” Drive
The Annual Kevin Gourley Memorial (Tootsie Roll) Drive will be held October 13th & 14th following all masses. The Tootsie Roll Drive supports people with disabilities from the local area. Thanks for your help, every little bit(e) counts.

RCIA: Come and See
The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is the process that adults complete to receive the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. Contact Matt Gray at (925) 202-5425 or mgray@catholicsofpleasonton.org.

Why Join The Knights Of Columbus?
Knights of Columbus is not just a fraternity name—it is a brotherhood of Catholic gentlemen who each play a part in improving the world around them, one community at a time. As brother Knights, we stand together in faith, dedicated to uphold the principals we cherish while lending support and strength to our parish, our families, and our fellow Knights.

Our members serve our pastor, priests, parish community, and our neighbors in need. You may have seen men in blue shirts involved in many parish activities and outreach programs.

CHARITY: Charity is the first and foremost virtue of a Knight. It is the cornerstone upon which our organization rests.

FAITH: Faith is our guide. We support vocations, seminarians, postulates, our Church and Faith

COMMUNITY: Our programs enrich our Parish and assist the less fortunate in our Pleasanton Community

FAMILY: Our programs strengthen and support families and marriages

YOUTH: We help today’s youth become tomorrow’s leaders with civic and religious responsibilities

Support your Parish and Community! Come join us and see what a difference you can make in the world. If interested, please contact the Knights of Columbus Membership Director, Darren Medeiros, at darrenmedeiros@gmail.com.

NOW YOU CAN JOIN ONLINE!
Either scan the QR code below or go to: https://kofc.org/apps/newjoin/en/registration/index.html
The Society of St. Vincent de Paul offers direct assistance to those in need on a person-to-person basis. It is this personalized involvement that makes the work of the Society unique. An essential precept of the Society’s work is to provide help while conscientiously maintaining the confidentiality and dignity of those we serve.

Each week, CCOP’s conference of the Society provides person-to-person aid to families and individuals in need here in Pleasanton. We use the financial donations you provide SVdP through 5th Sunday collections (typically 4 a year) to help local people get through rough periods in their lives by helping them to do such things as buy food, buy gasoline to get to their jobs, pay their rent, or pay their utility bills. We work to prevent homelessness by helping people faced with medical problems or job loss to stay in their homes and recover from crises that might otherwise drive them into homelessness.

We in the SVdP CCOP conference first want to thank you for the generous financial support you have given us through the years. Without your support, we would not be able to do this work.

Second, we invite people who have a desire to be a member of a team that interacts directly with the people in need to come to one of our meetings and meet the conference members and learn more about our work. We find the work both life-affirming and highly rewarding.

Please contact us at svdp.ccop@gmail.com or through the ministry sign-up process. Thank you!