



Hearing the Cry of the Earth

What is creation saying to us? What are the land, the animals or the oceans saying to us?

They are saying, "Help! We're in trouble!"

How are we as followers of Francis and Clare called to respond to the trouble?

What will happen to our children and grandchildren if we don't stop global heating from going past 1.5 degrees? The web of life is unraveling and we see the pain and suffering in God's creation. In our care for each other and the gift of God in creation, we respond with joy and love. What does this joy and love look like?

In this time of planetary trouble, what do joy and love look like?

Many of us have used Genesis Chapter One to treat creation as an environment to exploit rather than as our brother and sister. We have forgotten that we are made in the image of the creative and life-giving God. "God gave them his blessing and said: 'Have a lot of children. Fill the earth with people and bring it under your control. Rule over the fish in the ocean, the birds in the sky, and every animal on the earth.'" (Gen. 1:28) Dominion [rule] is not about control or about using others [people, animals, or the earth] for our gain. It is about living in a way where we join with the Creating Spirit so that all of creation and all of us who live in it may flourish. We lament we have not lived this way.

Day 8 of our Principles calls us to love Creation and God's gift and to resist all injustice. God's creation embraces all life, as Francis continues to show us. We are all brothers and sisters and must watch out for each other. We will continue to love what God has made. We affirm the work that many Franciscans are doing in addressing this climate emergency. More work is to be done.

We can all do something in our local area and some of us can do that and more by speaking to people in power about the anguish of creation. We may need to change priorities and do less on some things we presently do and more to address the climate emergency.

"Start by doing what is necessary; then do what is possible; and suddenly you will be doing the impossible."

Attributed to St. Francis

Signed, John Heberton, Minister General, New Zealand; Godfrey Fryar, Minister Provincial, Province of Asia-Pacific; Blair Matheson, Minister Provincial, Province of the Pacific; Michael Twum-Darko, Minister Provincial, Province of Africa; Tim Higgins, Acting Minister Provincial, Province of Europe and Janet Fedders, Minister Provincial, Province of the Americas. *Meeting of the Ministers of the Five Provinces of the Third Order, the Society of Saint Francis, August 2019, Sisters of the Cenacle Retreat Center, Long Island, New York.*