

**NE Vicariate “Prayer Walk for Climate Justice”
Saturday, May 20, 2023, 10:00 A.M.**

Opening

(Fr. Mike Biewend)

Our world is currently facing a climate change crisis. Sparked by the industrial revolution, changes to the world’s climate have been intensifying in recent decades. These changes are being caused by a rapid increase in emissions from fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and natural gas. The poor distribution and indiscriminate abuse of the Earth's resources put at risk the permanence of humanity and all the species on the planet.

We are faced not with two separate crises—one environmental and the other social — but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Long-term solutions demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature.

As Pope Benedict XVI stated in his encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate*, “The environment is God's gift to everyone, and in our use of it we have a responsibility towards the poor, towards future generations and towards humanity as a whole” (48).

In addition, Pope Francis alerts us in his encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, to the urgent need to protect our Common Home. He challenges us to unite the entire human family in the pursuit of sustainable development. And he urgently asks us to enter into a new dialogue on ways to build a better future for our planet. We must have a conversation that unites us, because the environmental challenges we are experiencing, and its human roots, concerns us all.

As we participate in this walk for social, economic, and environmental justice, may we heed and embrace Pope Francis’ call to unite in our stewardship of this beautiful Earth entrusted to us, and broaden our focus to include a hospitable planet that equally supports All human, plant, and animal life – and at ALL stages of life.

Station 1 – Indigenous People [Khunamokwst Park]

Chinook Blessing and Opening Prayer

(Eric Bernando)

Chinook Wawa Blessing.

(Betty Anderl)

Creator of All,

Thank you for the wonders of your creation. Thank you for guiding, leading, protecting, and developing us since the beginning of creation until now.

Help us grow in a universal awareness of the urgency of safeguarding and developing the wonders of your creation as we commit to taking the actions necessary for the long-term protection and health of our Common Home.

Help us to live and work harmoniously with your creation, and protect us from all dangers and destruction.

Amen.

How Impacted by Climate Change

(Julie Granger)

According to the International Labor Organization, Indigenous people represent approximately 6.2% of the world's population. They are among the first to face the direct consequences of climate change due to their dependence upon, and close relationship with, the environment and its natural resources. Climate change exacerbates the difficulties already faced by Indigenous communities, including political and economic marginalization, loss of land and resources, human rights violations, discrimination, and unemployment.

Indigenous cultures should not be converted to a modern culture; rather, they are to be respected. Pope Francis challenges us to listen to the wisdom of Indigenous people for understanding the human roots of the environmental crisis and taking significant steps toward developing sustainable practices. If we really want to care for our Common Home and

improve the health of our planet, we must make profound changes in lifestyle, production and consumption.

Parable

(Eric Bernando)

Concluding Prayer

(Fr. Dave Zegar)

Loving Creator, we are at the threshold of a new beginning and we feel stirred by the conviction that our vocational destiny is to bring beauty into the world, to open our hearts to the invitation to make all our lives matter, and to become people of generosity and justice. Source of all life, you have given us a beautiful planetary home and made us stewards of your creation. Give us courage to preserve this unique and precious gift for the good of all your creation.

Amen.

Station 2 – Nature/Wildlife [52nd and Prescott, with community garden and native grove of trees]

Opening Prayer

(Betty Anderl)

Creator of Beauty, you are alive and present. We see you in the outreaching trees. We feel you in the flow of the breeze. We sense you in the swell of the music. Thank you for the wonders of your creation and the beauty that surrounds us. Open our senses so we are in tune with your beauty and can delight and praise you for your goodness.

Amen.

How Impacted by Climate Change

(Bill Hunter)

Climate change is among the leading threats to the long-term survival of species and habitats. Increasingly warm temperatures are having widespread impacts on ecosystems and biodiversity around the globe, leading to species migration, extinctions, and changes in wildlife behavior. In June 2020, the House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis issued the report: “Solving the Climate Crisis: The Congressional Action Plan for a Clean Energy Economy and a Healthy, Resilient, and Just America.” Oregon’s Congressional House Representative, Suzanne Bonamici, is one of the authors. Calling the climate crisis not just a matter of science and economics, but a moral issue, the report quotes Pope Francis’ encyclical, *Laudato Si’*, noting that faith leaders and organization across religions and denominations have repeatedly called for action on climate change.

Throughout the report, the rapid loss of biodiversity is referenced as a critical threat to human, animal, and plant life. The United States is losing the equivalent of a football field’s worth of natural area every 30 seconds to human modification, such as urban development and energy infrastructure.

If we are to capture the full potential of “natural climate solutions,” the report points to conserving, protecting, and restoring natural landscapes and ecosystems such as forests, wetlands, and grasslands, recommending the federal government protect at least 30% of all U.S. lands and ocean areas by 2030. These natural landscapes and ecosystems are critical to solving the climate and biodiversity crises and, if maximized, have the potential to sequester up to one-fifth of net annual carbon dioxide emissions.

Parable

(Jennifer Winslow)

(Read in place of a speaker)

Native American author Robin Wall Kimmerer, in the book, “Braiding Sweetgrass,” introduces us to the genius Indigenous agricultural practice known as the “Three Sisters.” The Three Sisters consist of three seeds: corn, bean, and squash. According to a long-standing Native American practice, in May when the earth is moist, these three seeds are planted together in a mound, as opposed to the modern practice of planting like seeds in a row. The corn is first to emerge from the ground while the other seeds are “getting ready.” With the aid of soil water, the bean seed swells and bursts and sends a root deep into the ground. Once the root is secure, the stem bends in the shape of a hook and emerges its way above ground. A pair of fleshy leaves breaks the soil surface to join the already six-inch tall corn. Squash seeds take their time and are known as the “slow sister;” it may be weeks before the first stems emerge. As astutely understood by our Native American sisters and brothers, the birth order of these seeds are important to the success of all three crops.

Corn, the firstborn, grows straight, stiff, and fast, with the lofty goal of providing support for the bean. The bean first focuses on leaf growth while the corn concentrates on height. About the time the corn stalk is knee high, the bean switches gears and produces a slender green string spiraling upward while the corn stalk provides vertical support. Had the corn not started early, the bean vine would have strangled it! Squash is the late bloomer of this three-some. Squash extends itself over the ground, moving away from the corn and beans. It sets up broad lobed leaves that are bristly for discouraging hungry caterpillars. As the leaves grow wider, they shelter

the soil at the base of the corn and beans, keeping moisture in and other plants out. In this communal setting, each plant contributes to the others' ability to thrive.

This is but one example of how Native Americans have hundreds of years of experience tuning into the naturally-occurring rhythms of nature. When we allow nature to take the lead, Mother Nature will gently guide us on a path of prosperity available to all regardless of economic stature. We invite you to take a package of Three Sister seeds home with you today, and watch this miracle of nature unfold in your own yard or container garden. In the words of Kimmerer, "Respect one another, support one another, bring your gift to the world and receive the gifts of others, and there will be enough for all."

Concluding Prayer

(Fr. Mike Biewend)

Creator of beauty and truth, everything in your creation is connected, for all share a common origin in your creating hand. Help us to be models of environmental leadership, utilizing our rituals, religious education, facilities, and the public voices of our spiritual leaders, members and followers. Fill us with a spirit of praise, gratitude, wisdom, and courage, that we might care for creation and not misuse it, ensure that its goods are shared in justice with all our brothers and sisters, and speak out on its behalf whenever it is threatened.

Amen.

Station 3 – Youth [Rigler School, 54th and Prescott, with clean air monitoring device]

Opening Prayer

(Fr. Cameron Cortens)

Creator of all that exists, you have given us rule over the works of your hands, and put all things at our feet. However, our ambition has led us to act selfishly, to find ways to use up your gifts and discard them when they are no longer useful to us. Little by little, we have exhausted natural resources that seemed to be endless. We now realize that:

where there were waters in which the fishermen sailed, now there are deserts and abandoned boats;

where there were trees in which birds nested, now there are ashes from logs consumed by fires;

where there were fields that animals grazed, now there is a world of concrete;

where there was joy when the rain watered the lands, now there is sadness because the rain's intensity devastated the crops;

where there were houses where families grew up, now there are memories flooded by the rising rivers and seas; and

where the brightness of the stars and the moon could be seen, now the night sky lights up with car headlights.

Open our eyes to how we each have contributed to our climate crisis, and give us the wisdom and strength to act in the fight for a livable future for all.

Amen.

How Impacted by Climate Change

(Julie Granger)

The fate of the world is in the hands of the youth. As the impact of climate change intensifies over time, it is the children and young people of today who will face the worst effects. Young people all over the world have begun to fight back on a scale never seen before, with millions marching to demonstrate their support. Whether through education, technology, science or law – young people far and wide are tapping into their skills to speak up for climate action. One of the biggest assets young people have in the climate fight is the ability to make themselves heard on a global scale.

In 1989, world leaders made a historic commitment to the world’s children by adopting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child – an international agreement on childhood. This document proclaims every person under the age of 18 has the right to participate in the decision-making processes that impact them. This includes a public forum to express their views, and support for them to do it. We commend our youth’s courage, commitment, and spirited energies in leading us through and beyond this climate crisis. May we listen to them, and offer support and concrete action.

Parable

(Adah Crandall, youth activist representing Sunrise PDX)

Concluding Prayer

(Megan Lehman)

Loving Creator, do not let us be indifferent to what is happening around us. Water our arid hearts with hope. Stoke in us the flame of fraternity. Help us set the world on fire with acts of justice in favor of those who suffer most. Transform our attitudes and make our minds fertile to new ways of living. Enlighten us to propose, support and defend projects and laws that protect the environment. Use our hands to till ways of solidarity, and make our works and words bear fruit. May we overflow with joy once again when we contemplate your wonders.

Amen.

Station 4 – Climate Refugees [56nd and Prescott]

Opening Prayer

(Marianne Mauldin)

Creator of Hope,

Bless all people and embrace us with your abundant grace for working together in the journey to heal the Earth.

We pray for your wisdom, sympathy and creativity to take meaningful actions with a shared vision for the common good of all creation.

Amen.

How Impacted by Climate Change

(Jennifer Winslow)

Around the world, people are experiencing both the subtle and stark effects of climate change. Gradually shifting weather patterns, rising sea levels, and more extreme weather events are devastating evidence of both a rapidly changing climate and an urgent need for solutions.

While the impacts of climate change affect every country on every continent, they don't do it equally. People already burdened by poverty and oppression often suffer the harshest consequences, while having the least ability to cope. These changes disrupt the efforts of communities and families who have been working hard to lift themselves out of poverty. Instead of being able to thrive, they are fighting merely to survive.

Rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and prolonged drought force millions of people to lose or move away from their homes every year in search of food, water, shelter or jobs. The poor and vulnerable communities often live in low-lying coastal zones and dry arid regions or flood prone areas. And if sea levels continue to rise without intervention, many of those living near the ocean — about 40 percent of the world's population — will

be at risk of losing their homes. A total of 9.8 million people around the world are driven from their homes by shocks like drought, hurricanes and landslides — around 50,000 people every day.

Parable

Vina and Dee Thomas, climate refugees from Truk Island, Micronesia, and parishioners of St. Charles)

Concluding Prayer

(Therese Fenzl)

Compassionate Creator, we pray for justice and fairness for those worst hit by our changing climate. We know people living in extreme poverty around the world are disproportionately hit by the climate crisis yet have done the least to contribute to it. They also have the fewest resources to implement change. We ask for your mercy and repentance when our blind consumerism has led to the destruction of our Common Home.

Amen.

Station 5 – Conclusion [Khunamokwst Park]

Concluding Prayer

(Darlene Maurer)

Creator of all life, like beautiful fragrant flowers along a welcoming path, your blessings lie before us. You have graced us with another chance to walk in your garden, and today we have walked together in solidarity for environmental justice for all creation. Touch our hearts to work tirelessly for a just and equitable solution to the climate crisis of our time. Each of us carries a divine spark, unique gifts, and a moral responsibility to make our lives a blessing for the Earth and all its inhabitants. The Occupy movement reminds us of the deep disparity between the few who are rich and the many who are poor, and of unemployment, endless war, and overwhelming poverty.

Open our eyes to our sisters and brothers who bear the burden of climate change, and broaden our understanding that **All** life at **All** stages of life are worthy of protection. May we not only see with our eyes, and speak with our voice, but also attentively listen with our ears to your gentle guidance that leads to our environmental and spiritual healing. Let our time together this day be a catalyst — individually and collectively — as we join with others today who seek to heal our suffering Earth. In this Easter Season, help us to realize there is no death without resurrection. Give us strength to stay on your path that we might enjoy the sweet scent of your presence as you walk with us, and shake us from our slumber as we hold out hope for the world.

Amen.