

Walk gently *with* Earth

Pitt Street Uniting Church, 2 September 2018
A Contemporary Reflection by Warren Talbot

Creation 1B – Earth Sunday

**Genesis 1: 1–25; Job 12:7–10; Contemporary Reading: ‘The Rocks Pulsate’
by George Macleod, founder, Iona Community.**

This reflection can be viewed on You Tube at <http://www.pittstreetuniting.org.au/> under “Sunday Gatherings” tab

A few months ago, a friend lent me their copy of David Suzuki’s autobiography. It provided many insights into the remarkable life of one person who has inspired and encouraged millions of people to change our relationship with Earth.

In the final chapter, David Suzuki writes about his atheism and, in cosmic terms, the insignificance of his life. I wasn’t bothered by the atheism, especially as he didn’t define that problematic term. But a life of cosmic insignificance did leave me troubled.

Did you notice that our reading from the Hebrew Scriptures this morning did not include verses 26 and 27. We started at 25 and read down to verse 1. Verses 26 and 27 include the creation of Homo sapiens. Today, it is Planet Earth Sunday and it is Earth, in and of herself, that is celebrated in this sacred Jewish and Christian poetry.

God declares that Earth is good.

Light, sun, moon and stars...are good!

Waters and the sky, sea life and birds...are good!

Dry land and land creatures...are good!

Earth’s creation myth is not just a nice preamble to the creation of human beings.

Earth’s creation myth is about Earth herself.

In the Season of Creation, we are invited to see Creation - and Earth herself – as living, dynamic and creative expressions of the Spirit of Life. Of Divine Presence.

The late Barry Leal makes this point in one of his books. Barry wrote:

*“It is not just **our** Earth that is being degraded. It is God’s Earth that is being despoiled.”*

In words from the contemporary prayer from Iona we heard:

“the rocks pulsate... Turn but a stone and an angel moves.”

In our second reading from the Hebrew Scriptures, the literary creation which is “Job”, the protagonist is being given a very hard time – mainly by Satan, but with Yahweh’s permission, and Job’s so-called ‘friends’.

Job is wondering who can he listen to in this time of suffering? And so, we have that stunning passage from chapter 12. Job is asking himself: who can I listen to? The text gives the answer:

*“Ask the animals, and they will teach you;
ask the birds of the air, and they will tell you,
and the fish of the sea will declare to you.
Ask Earth, and Earth will teach you.”*

Ask Earth, and Earth will teach you.

Earth is alive – Earth is interconnected – but Earth is not well.

Earth is now the prophet. The prophet pleading with human beings.

Earth, the prophet, is saying STOP destroying my forests.

Earth, the prophet, is saying STOP polluting the air that I need to breathe.

Earth, the prophet, is saying STOP exploiting my fossils for your electricity.

Earth, the prophet, is saying STOP degrading my oceans with your plastic.

Earth, the prophet, is saying STOP.

David Suzuki may, or may not be right about our cosmic insignificance.

But he is right to call individuals, communities and governments to a new relationship with Earth. David Suzuki calls it a “sacred balance”.

This balance deeply respects Earth – not as an object for us to use.

Not even, I think, an object for us to walk ‘on’, but to walk with Earth.

As people of faith we are called therefore to walk with Earth. To respect Earth. To listen to Earth. To be partners with Earth herself.

Praise be to Earth!

Praise be to Divine Presence in all of Life!

Amen.

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