**JUNE 2019**

**STEWARDS OF OUR EARTH**



**Bulletin: June 2**

This is a follow-up to our recent Catholic Climate Covenant program on *All Creation Gives God Praise*.

Recently there has been a push to remove gray wolves from the Endangered Species List.
Over one million public comments were submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in opposition of this measure. But the fight to protect wolves and other critical wildlife is far from over, and there is ongoing debate between ranchers and conservationists.

A little history from The Save Animals Facing Extinction Team …

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| Gray wolves were driven nearly extinct almost 100 years ago but were reintroduced in Yellowstone National Park in 1995. In their absence, elk populations exploded causing a destruction of young brush and trees. This caused extreme concern around possible erosion and plant degradation in the Park. But gray wolf reintroduction helped bring elk populations to a manageable level and protected areas from overgrazing which greatly increased vegetation.  |

Gray wolf reintroduction is just one example of the impact one single species can have on an entire environment. That’s why **The Save Animals Facing Extinction Team** is working round the clock to push for wildlife protection measures and life-saving efforts around the world. Consider supporting their work.

**Bulletin: June 9**

**Why Is Biodiversity Important?**

“Biodiversity is all the different kinds of life you’ll find in one area—the variety of animals, plants, fungi, and even microorganisms like bacteria that make up our natural world. Each of these species and organisms work together in ecosystems, like an intricate web, to maintain balance and support life. Biodiversity supports everything in nature that we need to survive: food, clean water, medicine, and shelter.” (Lorin Hancock, World Wildlife Fund E-NEWS,

May 2019)

That’s why the recent report by the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services is a critical worldwide call to action. **Around 1 million animal and plant species are now threatened with extinction—more than ever before in human history!**

Overfished oceans, deforestation, and water pollution are impacting biodiversity around the world, from faraway places to our own backyards.

**Bulletin: June 16**

June 18th, 2019 marks the fourth anniversary of the release of Pope Francis’ encyclical, ***Laudato Si’: On Care for Our Common Home***.

Catholic Climate Covenant is delivering! Here are two major initiatives.

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| * **Catholic Energies is about to install the largest solar array ever in Washington, DC:** a 2-megawatt system that dramatically reduces emissions and zeros-out the electric costs for all 12 buildings owned by Catholic Charities (both in DC and in Maryland). The savings will be diverted to core mission activities: feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, caring for the sick, and supporting the expectant mother.
* At the end of this month, **over 200 leaders from across the US will gather at Creighton University**, a Jesuit university in Omaha, to design resources and programs to more fully integrate *Laudato Si’* into the daily life and ministry of our Church.

These efforts to care for our common home are examples of the engagement of a growing number of Catholics on the climate crisis. If you would like to contribute to these efforts, go to <https://catholicclimatecovenant.org/> and click on the Laudato ***Si’*** 2020 Fund Campaign.The Social Justice Committee is supporting this effort with a donation. |

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**Bulletin: June 23**

We thought you would appreciatethis reflection by Sr. Joan Brown on Diversity, Essence, and Communion offered by the Center for Action and Contemplation. The piece has been excerpted for the bulletin. Thanks to Sr. Ruthann O’Mara, SSJ for sharing.

*Sr. Joan Brown is a longtime friend and Franciscan, serving as Executive Director of New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light, a nonprofit that works for climate justice.* She writes about three foundational principles needed for harmony and wholeness: differentiation or diversity; subjectivity, interiority, or essence; and communion or community and interconnectedness.

First, every one of us—every human being, every drop of water, every molecule, every bird, each grain of sand, and each mountain—is ***distinct* or *different****.* Each is a distinct manifestation of Divine Love energy. The universe thrives upon, and cannot exist without, diversity. The very differences that we shun, avoid, or even destroy are necessary for life to continue in a multitude of magnificent forms….

The second cosmic principle, ***interiority* or *essence****,* is more easily understood by people of all religious traditions. Every created thing is holy. Every blade of grass, grasshopper, child, and element is holy. Ecological degradation, racism, discrimination, hate, and disinterest in working for justice and love each speak to the lack of honoring the interiority of that which stands before me…. In order to help people adjust and cope with climate change, which is the most critical concern of our day, I believe we must get in touch with the sacred essence of everything that exists.

The third cosmic principle, ***communion* or *community****,* is intimately linked to …. [the other two]. A quote attributed to Thich Nhat Hanh states it well: “We are here to awaken from the illusion of our separateness.” [1] The gravitational pull of love draws everyone and everything into relationship and communion….

Perhaps, as Beatrice Bruteau wrote, *“If we cannot love our neighbor as ourself, it is because we do not perceive our neighbor as ourself.”* [2]

If we are unable to see that we are in communion with another, we will not realize that what we do to ourselves, we do to the other and to the earth. Likewise, we do not realize that, ultimately, our lack of understanding turns back toward us in violence, whether that is fear of other races and diversity, or destruction of Earth because we see the natural world as an object rather than a subject with interiority….

We are called to be larger than who we can imagine being in this moment. The cosmic principles are a new way of understanding, seeing, and acting in a world that seems to be torn apart by a misunderstanding of the beauty of diversity, the holiness of essence, and the evolutionary pull of communion.

[1] Thich Nhat Hanh’s teaching shared by Wendy Johnson, “A Floating Sangha Takes Root: Early Days in Plum Village with Thich Nhat Hanh,” *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review*, vol. 24, no. 3 (Spring 2015). See [https://tricycle.org/magazine/floating-sangha-takes-root/](https://email.cac.org/t/d-l-pdlhha-xluuhox-r/).

[2] Beatrice Bruteau, *The Holy Thursday Revolution* (Orbis: 2005), 6.

Joan Brown, “Embracing Diversity through the Cosmic Principles,” “Unity and Diversity,” [*Oneing*](https://email.cac.org/t/d-l-pdlhha-xluuhox-y/), vol. 6, no. 2 (CAC Publishing: 2018), 18-22.

**Bulletin: June 30**

**Pope Francis Calls for Immediate Action on Climate Change**

On May 27, 2019, Pope Francis addressed finance ministers from various nations at the “Climate Change and New Evidence from Science, Engineering, and Policy” meeting, organized by the Pontifical Academy of Sciences. In the address, Pope Francis called on them to take immediate action on climate change. He urged them to:

* put an end to global dependency on fossil fuels;
* open a new chapter of clean and safe energy, that utilizes, for example, renewable resources such as wind, sun and water;
* agree upon a common plan that accords with climate science, the latest in clean energy engineering, and above all the ethics of human dignity.
* above all, to act prudently and responsibly in our economies to actually meet human needs, promote human dignity, help the poor and be set free of the idolatry of money that creates so much suffering….

You can read the full text of the Pope’s address [here](https://default.salsalabs.org/Tfa716930-b0c9-4781-9d7b-8265cba95d1b/393d246b-d2f0-4452-bdd8-a94003e57465).

**Our Social Justice Committee meets on the 1st Sunday each month after the 11:00 Mass on the lower level of the church. All are welcome!**