

Wednesday Earth Wisdom – June 26, 2019

Integral Ecology: Over that past two or three years, this concept has been studied, reflected upon and discussed. Coming from various areas of life and study, the concept can be overwhelming. Now, perhaps it is time to talk about what actions that we as people of faith can take — people who strive to follow the ethics and morality for the common good and who recognize that abuse of the environment impacts those on the margins; actions that have been accomplished and actions that make the future possible.

An example of this is the climate crisis. As we re-examine our use of fossil fuels, which produce more carbon dioxide and other gases, we also evaluate the effects of these gases. With the warming of the colder areas such as the Arctic, ice is melting at an increasingly rapid pace. Small islands in the western Pacific are disappearing; at least eight of them are now below the rising ocean waters. (www.newscientist.com/article/2146594-eight-low-lying-pacific-islands-swallowed-whole-by-rising-seas/)

While not all low-lying islands are disappearing, what happens to the people who lived on those islands that *have* disappeared? What happens to their local monuments and places of history? What happens to *the people themselves*?

So, what actions are possible? How do our actions correspond to our values, our Constitutions and our focus on integral ecology? Both the Tacoma Dominicans and the Sisters of Providence have Constitutions that reference the need for reflecting on the signs of the times and addressing the sources of social sin. Both congregations reflect on and have the freedom to respond to human and planetary needs, keeping in mind that as we respond to planetary needs, human needs are addressed at the same time. THAT is the premise of integral ecology!

You've heard these before but they bear repeating. One individual action that will impact the climate crisis is to become a vegetarian. Research by the Worldwatch Institute calculates greenhouse gases from agriculture to be 51% of the total. For those of us who like meat and dairy, become vegetarian one or two days a week if not completely. That is still an important action to take. Also, buy local as much as possible.

(www.forbes.com/sites/jeffmcmahon/2017/01/23/nine-things-you-can-do-about-climate-change/#718dd828680c)

You may already be doing this to address the climate crisis. If not, it helps to remember that even the smallest action can make a big difference when many individuals are performing the same action.

