Chapter 2 - Ecological Education and Spirituality

#222 – Christian spirituality proposes an alternative understanding of the quality of life, and encourages a prophetic and contemplative lifestyle, one capable of deep enjoyment free of obsession with consumption. We need to take up an ancient lesson, found in different religious traditions and also in the bible. It is the conviction that “less is more”. … Christian spirituality proposes a growth marked by moderation and the capacity to be happy with little. It is a return to that simplicity which allows us to stop and appreciate the small things, to be grateful for the opportunities which life affords us, to be spiritually detached from what we possess, and not to succumb to sadness for what we lack. This implies avoiding the dynamic of domination and the mere accumulation of pleasures.

#226 – We are speaking of an attitude of the heart, one which approaches life with serene attentiveness, which is capable of being fully present to someone without thinking of what comes next, which accepts each moment as a gift from God to be lived to the full. Jesus taught us this attitude when he invited us to contemplate the lilies of the field and the birds of the air, or when seeing the rich young man and knowing his restlessness, “he looked at him with love” (MK 10:21) Jesus was completely present to everyone and to everything, and in this way he showed us the way to overcome that unhealthy anxiety which makes us superficial, aggressive, and compulsive consumers.

#229 – We must regain the conviction that we need one another, that we have a shared responsibility for others and for the world, and that being good and decent are worth it. We have had enough of immorality and the mockery of ethics, goodness, faith, and honesty. It is time to acknowledge that light-hearted superficiality has done us no good. When the foundations of social life are corroded, what ensues are battles over conflicting interests, new forms of violence and brutality, and obstacles to the growth of a genuine culture of care for the environment.

#231 – Love, overflowing with small gestures of mutual care, is also civic and political, and it makes itself felt in every action that seeks to build a better world. Love for society and commitment to the common good are outstanding expressions of a charity which affects not only relationships between individuals but also “macro-relationships, social, economic and political ones”. That is why the Church set before the world the ideal of a “civilization” of love. Social love is the key to authentic development. … When we feel God is calling us to intervene with others in these social dynamics, we should realize that this, too, is part of our spirituality, which is an exercise of charity and, as such, matures and sanctifies us.

#241 – Mary, the Mother who cared for Jesus, now cares with maternal affection and pain for the wounded world. Just as her pierced heart mourned the death of Jesus, so now she grieves
for the sufferings of the crucified poor and for the creatures of this world laid waste by human power. She is the Woman, “clothed in the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.” (Rev 12:1) Carried up into heaven, she is the Mother and Queen of all creation. She treasures the entire life of Jesus in her heart and now understands the meaning of all things. Hence, we can ask her to enable us to look at this world with eyes of wisdom.

**From the Wisdom Tradition - Cantique 26 - Louis de Montfort**

translated by Ann Nielsen, DW

Sing the praise of Holy Wisdom, she who guides and cares for all;  
Shaping harmony and order in all creatures great and small.  
Understanding and directing with her strength and gentleness,  
Ruling all with regal prudence and without the slightest stress.

All the cosmos speaks of Wisdom; every age and every place;  
All the earth enjoys her presence, knows her order, feels her grace.  
All the seasons in their cycles, shifting clouds, and sky and air;  
All God’s creatures interacting, know her help and loving care.

From horizon to horizon stretches Wisdom’s fond embrace;  
At a glance her wondrous vision sees and gathers all in place.  
She dispenses and arranges, orders, clothes in beauty’s glow.  
All from brightest, highest angel to the tiniest worm below.

Over everything Wisdom watches, only fools are unaware;  
Not the smallest leaf falls earthward outside Wisdom’s loving care.  
She controls the rolling thunder, winds and clouds that roam the sky,  
Dust that stirs and settles earthward, storms that over the oceans fly.

In the hand that made the universe, recognize God’s power and might;  
Feel the depths of God’s compassion; know God’s touch both tender and light.  
Filled with peace and deep thanksgiving from heart felt humility  
Let your spirit praise God’s Wisdom in a true simplicity.

**For Reflection:**

*Over the years how has care for our common home and the common good enlightened your sense that “less is more”?*

“Love, overflowing with small gestures of mutual care, is also civic and political, and it makes itself felt in every action that seeks to build a better world.” How is this evident in your life, family, community, church?

*What light does our Wisdom Tradition shine on forming an ecological education and spirituality?*
Wisdom Circles
On Care for Our Common Home
May 2016

Chapter 6 - Ecological Education and Spirituality

Setting - a candle, a cloth, and image or symbol of our common home.

Song or Chant – of your choice

Reading: Matt 6:26 - 33

Response: Psalm 37 – from Iona Abbey Worship Book

Trust in God and do what is good; settle down and be at peace.
Let your God be your delight and grant your heart’s desire.

Give your life over to God to act on your behalf
to make your integrity shine forth and your justice as bright at noon.

Be still before God; wait patiently, not envying those who prosper,
nor fretting at those whose malicious plans bring down the needy and the poor.

So look for the honest, and look to the righteous, the future belongs to the peacemakers.
God is their helper, their deliverer, their refuge in times of distress.

Sharing – All have the opportunity to share on the readings and reflections for the month.

Wisdom Word – After all have shared, allow a word or phrase to capture the heart of the group’s experience.

Circle Prayer – Bring to your circle the people, places and circumstances for which you wish to pray.

Closing Prayer: from Laudato Si’ p. 120

God of Love, show us our place in this world
as channels of your love
for all the creatures of this earth,
for not one of them is forgotten in your sight.
Enlighten those who possess power and money that they may avoid the sin of indifference, that they may love the common good, advance the weak, and care for this world in which we live. The poor and the earth are crying out. O God, seize us with your power and light, help us to protect all life, to prepare for a better future, for the coming of your kingdom of justice, peace, love and beauty. Praise be to You! AMEN!

LOOKING AHEAD

The Wisdom Circles for the past decade have been leading the way into our Wisdom Spirituality Workshops by incorporating the same themes. The past few years we have focused on the first three of the means or pathways to Wisdom and this year we have heeded the call of Pope Francis to care for our common home.

A good number of us have found the Wisdom Circles beneficial for our growth and development. Others have found it invaluable in welcoming new seekers to the Way of Wisdom. Some others have sought alternate ways to grow and develop in a variety of community settings.

In June, we will be invited to reflect together on what have been some of the gifts of participating in Wisdom Circles. We will also explore what possibilities the future might hold as we consider present interests, desires and energies.

Thanks you for cherishing and sharing the Way of Wisdom and for your continued participation.

Blessings, Cathy