



## The Word...

“For creation awaits with eager expectation  
the revelation of the children of God;  
for creation was made subject to futility,  
not of its own accord but because of the one who subjected it,  
in hope that creation itself would be set free from slavery to corruption  
and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God.  
We know that all creation is groaning in labor pains even until now”  
*(from Rm 8:8-23).*

## Pondering the Word ...

Creation is groaning? I'd say she is outright screaming now!

Scientists have just released information that the Earth is the hottest it's been in a projected 125,000 years!  
(<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/earth-is-warmer-than-its-been-in-125-000-years/>).

Let's put aside the discussion of who and what is to blame here. We are past the point where pointing fingers is going to help. Global warming is a reality. Scientists know it has happened before in the earth's history, and it is happening now at an accelerated rate: “The rate of warming since 1981 is more than twice as fast: 0.32° F (0.18° C) per decade” (<https://www.climate.gov/news-features/understanding-climate/climate-change-global-temperature>). Past global warming epochs basically wiped out most living things and we are seeing that happen today, not just in the plant and animal kingdom but among humankind as well.

The Earth is indeed groaning and wailing: we hear it in the cries of mothers whose children die in their arms from starvation and in the lament as the elderly succumb to the heat, even in so-called “first-world” countries. (I've always thought that expression really means, “We come first!”)

“In the hope that creation itself will also be liberated from decay into the freedom of the glory of God's children” (v. 21, literal Greek translation). Creation hopes and we hope. But this hope requires we roll up our sleeves. It is time to put aside the self-destruction of politics and work together to save not only ourselves, but all of God's creation.

## Living the Word...

In the Native American tradition, there's something called “seventh generation planning.” It means exactly what it says: any community decisions must first consider the impacts seven generations hence. Today, we make decisions based on our wants right now, with no forethought to how it might affect us tomorrow, much less how it impacts others or creation! The magnitude of this threat is overwhelming, and, like the revelers in the story of Noah, our human tendency is to ignore it. But for the sake of our children's children—just two generations hence—we need to raise our voices through how we vote and shop and by active involvement in community efforts. Pray the Spirit of Wisdom will descend on the leaders of the world to put aside this rampant slavery to corruption to bring about freedom for the Earth and her creatures.

## Personal Reflections and Ideas ...

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**Mon, Jul 17:** *A new king came to power in Egypt. He said to his subjects, "Look how numerous the people of the children of Israel are growing! Come, let us deal shrewdly with them..." taskmasters were set over the children of Israel to oppress them with forced labor (Ex 1:8-14,20).* **Reflection/Provision:** Exodus story revisited: "Look how numerous these foreigners have become. Come let us deal shrewdly with them. Let us invite them to become a part of our society, not as second-class citizens, but with the same freedoms we enjoy. They have many gifts to share. Let them worship their God and keep their customs as they choose, but let us make them feel welcome so they can strengthen our country and not turn to others who do not want to see our country thrive." Some might think this is a stretch, but it is at least worth some consideration and prayer. Reflect on this other way of thinking about what nationalism can mean.

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**Tue, Jul 18:** *Pharaoh's daughter... was moved with pity: "It is one of the Hebrews' children." ...[she] adopted him and called him Moses (Ex 2:1-15).* **Reflection/Provision:** We think of the Egyptians as being primo bad guys, but we hear today Pharaoh's own daughter is moved with pity for this child she would adopt and name Moses. (Note: his name is Egyptian, not Hebrew.) Moses grew up and was educated in the palace. He remained true to his Hebrew roots, but it is also likely that he, like the Israelites who lived in Egypt for 400 years, incorporated aspects of Egyptian culture—for better or worse: think golden calf! I am puzzled when people talk about "purity" when it comes to rituals and beliefs which have evolved over the millennia. Jesus became flesh and read the signs of the times when it came to his message of love and peace. We are to do the same. Pray with this, especially if religious "purity" ever gets in the way of loving others.

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**Wed, Jul 19:** *Leading the flock across the desert, he came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There an angel of the LORD appeared to him in fire flaming out of a bush" (Ex 3:1-6, 9-12).* **Reflection/Provision:** God tends to appear in the dryness of the desert, often to people running away from something. Many of us live so comfortably we, in effect, run away from dryness, filling our days with distractions of bounty and busyness. The irony, though, is that if we are lucky, we come to understand the dryness we are trying to avoid instead creates a spiritual dryness that only God can quench. If you find yourself awash in too much stuff and not enough spirit, start simply by giving thanks and praise to God as the source of your bounty. Look at your possessions with an eye to what brings you closer to God. Could some of your "stuff" fill a true need for another?

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**Thu, Jul 20:** *"If they ask me, 'What is his name?' what am I to tell them?" God replied, "I am who am" (Ex 3:13-20).* **Reflection/Provision:** "Ehyeh asher Ehyeh." "I am He who endures." "I will be who I will be." However you translate it, it is a message of hope. But it is also a reminder that God is God and we are not; that God will endure forever and is to be revered as such. Yes, we hear in this of the comfort and rest Jesus promises in today's gospel provided we take upon ourselves his yoke of love and compassionate service and that we continually thank and praise the One who is and will be. *Be still and know that I am God" (Ps 46:10).*

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**Fri, Jul 21:** *"Every family must procure a lamb...they shall eat its roasted flesh ...None of it must be kept beyond the next morning; whatever is left over in the morning shall be burned up" (Ex 11:10-12:14).* **Reflection/Provision:** As Christians, we see Jesus as the Paschal Lamb and the story of Exodus as an allegory for our journey to the Promised Land. But there is one significant difference: While nothing is to be left over from the Passover lamb, we believe Jesus is with us always through the gift of his Spirit that burns in our hearts. Could it be the Promised Land is here and now, but we just fail to live in it? Reflect on this in prayer.

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**Sat, Jul 22:** *Mary Magdalene came to the tomb while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb. So, she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple...Mary stayed outside the tomb weeping (Jn 20:1-2, 11-18).* We all know how this plays out: Peter and John come to the tomb, then head back to their hiding place, confused, frightened, and already thinking about next steps. Mary, instead, is present to the moment, allowing her grief and love to supplant her fear. By staying present she is rewarded with the most intimate of theophanies. **Reflection/ Provision:** EVERY spiritual practice speaks of the importance of being present. In Ignatian spirituality we strive to find God in all things but that puts the onus on us. In reality, we pray God, who is everywhere, will find us open and aware. If you struggle to be present, you may be trying too hard. Instead, pray for the grace of openness. Just be where you are, as you are. Let God come and gently call your name.