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**Hearing the Cry of the Earth**

**What is creation saying to us? What are the land, the animals or the oceans saying to us?**

**They are saying, “Help! We’re in trouble!”**

**How are we as followers of Francis and Clare called to respond to the trouble?**

**What will happen to our children and grandchildren if we don’t stop global heating from going past 1.5 degrees? The web of life is unraveling and we see the pain and suffering in God’s creation. In our care for each other and the gift of God in creation, we respond with joy and love. What does this joy and love look like?**

**In this time of planetary trouble, what do joy and love look like?**

**Many of us have used Genesis Chapter One to treat creation as an environment to exploit rather than as our brother and sister. We have forgotten that we are made in the image of the creative and life-giving God. “God gave them his blessing and said: ‘Have a lot of children! Fill the earth with people and bring it under your control. Rule over the fish in the ocean, the birds in the sky, and every animal on the earth.’” (Gen. 1:28) Dominion [rule] is not about control or about using others [people, animals, or the earth] for our gain. It is about living in a way where we join with the Creating Spirit so that all of creation and all of us who live in it may flourish. We lament we have not lived this way.**

**Day 8 of our Principles calls us to love Creation and God’s gift and to resist all injustice. God’s creation embraces all life, as Francis continues to show us. We are all brothers and sisters and must watch out for each other. We will continue to love what God has made. We affirm the work that many Franciscans are doing in addressing this climate emergency. More work is to be done.**

**We can all do something in our local area and some of us can do that and more by speaking to people in power about the anguish of creation. We may need to change priorities and do less on some things we presently do and more to address the climate emergency.**

**“Start by doing what is necessary; then do what is possible; and suddenly you will be doing the impossible.” Attributed to St. Francis**

**Signed, John Hebenton, Minister General, New Zealand; Godfrey Fryar, Minister Provincial, Province of Asia-Pacific; Blair Matheson, Minister Provincial, Province of the Pacific; Michael Twum-Darko, Minister Provincial, Province of Africa; Tim Higgins, Acting Minister Provincial, Province of Europe and Janet Fedders, Minister Provincial, Province of the Americas. *Meeting of the Ministers of the Five Provinces of the Third Order, the Society of Saint Francis, August 2019, Sisters of the Cenacle Retreat Center, Long Island, New York.***

**The Third Order  
Society of St. Francis**

**Living with the Principles of the Order   
(excerpts)**

**Day 5 – The First Aim: To make our Lord known and loved**

The Order believes that it is the commission of the church to make the gospel known to all, and therefore accepts the duty of bringing others to know Christ, and of praying and working for the coming of the Kingdom of God.

* If we understand Creation as God’s first revelation or gospel, how does this affect our duty to make the gospel known to all?

**Day 8 – The Second Aim: To spread the spirit of love and harmony**

Our chief object is to reflect that openness to all which was characteristic of Jesus. This can only be achieved in a spirit of chastity, which sees others as belonging to God and not as a means of self-fulfillment.

* Who are these “others”? How do we treat them as a means of self-fulfillment?

**Day 10-12 – The Third Aim: To live simply**

Although we possess property and earn money to support ourselves and our families, we show ourselves to be true followers of Christ and of Saint Francis by our readiness to live simply and to share with others. All of us accept that we avoid luxury and waste, and regard our possessions as being held in trust for God….Personal spending is limited to what is necessary for our health and well-being and that of our dependents. We aim to stay free from all attachment to wealth, keeping ourselves constantly aware of the poverty in the world and its claim on us.

* How are our definitions of luxury and waste, health and well-being, affected by climate change?
* What kinds of poverty have you increasingly become aware of as climate change receives more attention?

**Day 16 – The First Way of Service: Prayer**

Tertiaries recognize the power of intercessory prayer for furthering the purposes of God’s kingdom, and therefore seek a deepening communion with God in personal devotion, and constantly intercede for the needs of his church and his world.

* How have you altered (or how do you want to alter) your prayer life in light of climate change?

**Day 18 – The Second Way of Service: Study**

Some of us accept the duty of contributing, through research and writing, to a better understanding of the church’s mission in the world: the application of Christian principles to the use and distribution of wealth; questions concerning justice and peace; and of all other questions concerning the life of faith.

* How do you study the issue of climate change?

**Day 22-24– The First Note: Humility**

Humility confesses that we have nothing that we have not received and admits the fact of our insufficiency and our dependence upon God….The faults that we see in others are the subject of prayer rather than of criticism. We take care to cast out the beam from our own eye before offering to remove the speck from another’s….When asked to undertake work of which we feel unworthy or incapable, we do not shrink from it on the grounds of humility, but confidently attempt it through the power that is made perfect in weakness.

* There is much we do not know: the future, the accuracy of our knowledge, the potential efficacy of our solutions. How can the practice of humility keep us from falling into pessimism or despair?
* When faced with danger, a natural human response is to spread blame. “If only *those* people did things differently, we wouldn’t be in this situation.” How can we advocate and model change, without judging?

**Day 25-27– The Second Note: Love**

Love is the distinguishing feature of all true disciples of Christ who wish to dedicate themselves to him as his servants….This unity of all who believe in him will become, as our Lord intended, a witness to the world of his divine mission….We gladly give of ourselves, remembering that love is measured by sacrifice.

* How do you demonstrate love of God’s creation?

**Day 28-29 – The Third Note: Joy**

Tertiaries, rejoicing in the Lord always, show in our lives the grace and beauty of divine joy….We delight in fun and laughter, rejoicing in God’s world, its beauty and its living creatures, calling nothing common or unclean….We carry within us an inner peace and happiness….even in times of darkness and difficulty, giving cheerful courage in the face of disappointment, and an inward serenity and confidence through sickness and suffering.

* What can you do to remain open to God’s gift of joy? How can we share God’s joy with others, even as we approach the daunting challenges of climate change?