

Be an Agent of Radical Change

Acts 9:1-20

The 40 days of Lent are over. For those 40 days, I gave up desserts, television and the snooze button. This was huge for me! Not only did I stay faithful to my Lenten disciplines, I also lost a few pounds. However, the Monday after Easter I found myself sitting in front of my television mindlessly eating ice cream. My heart became heavy, very heavy.

What was the discipline really about?

What lessons did I learn?

Was I radically changed?

In today's lectionary text, we find Saul. Saul is relentlessly pursuing and persecuting the Christians. His disdain and hate has left no room for mercy and grace. Therefore, Saul is before the courts asking for warrants so that he may imprison any Christians he find in Damascus. In spite of this, on his way to Damascus Saul encounters the power of God. This experience completely changed Saul's life. He not only changed his ways, he even changed his name. Saul's encounter led him to make a radical change.

This year's Earth Day theme is *A Call for Action on Climate Change*. Unfortunately, since last year this time, our environmental climate has changed. The Earth is warmer, the weather system is in flux, and God's creation is suffering. Each year, on April 22nd we are reminded of how to better care for the environment and each other. Therefore, Earth Day 2007 is calling for our *action* and our *change*.

What does it mean to change the climate—for the better? Saul did it, Jesus did it and now we can. It may seem like things are too far-gone, but not so my brothers and sisters. Just as Jesus told the disciples to launch out into the deep (John 21:1-19), try something new and different, we too must engage in *action* that will radically *change* lives. We must engage in positive action that will radically change the environment.

Therefore, as a Christian community, like Saul, we are no longer blind to the fact that God's first creation is in trouble. The scales must fall off our eyes so that we too can see that global warming has not only changed our lives, but will also drastically change the lives of many generations to come. By engaging in radical action now, we can be faithful stewards of God's creation.

So, what can you do? I'm glad you asked...

- Encourage your faith community to conduct a professional, comprehensive audit of the buildings and grounds in order to determine its carbon "footprint".
- Join a local Interfaith Power and Light program in your state or city. Find more at: www.theregenerationproject.org/State.html.

For more information on how you can be an agent of radical change visit www.earthday.net

Earth Day Sunday

April 22, 2007

A Call for Action on Climate Change

Earth Day Sunday
April 22, 2007
A Call for Action on Climate Change

CALL TO WORSHIP *read responsively*

O Lord, we praise you for the Earth is yours; everything and everyone in it!
We give praise because we know our help comes from the Lord, who made the heaven and earth.

O Lord, we worship you for you are enthroned in the heavens!
We thank you for watching over us as we slumbered and for giving us traveling mercies.

O Lord, we honor you for your steadfast love and faithfulness!
We honor you for the Earth is full of the steadfast love of the Lord.

Therefore, we will bless the Lord at all times
The praises of God shall continually be in our mouths.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE *from The Book of Common Prayer*

For Joy in God's Creation

O heavenly Father, who has filled the world with beauty: Open our eyes to behold your gracious hand in all your works; that, rejoicing in your whole creation, we may learn to serve you with gladness; for the sake of him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For Knowledge of God's Creation

Almighty and everlasting God, you made the universe with all its marvelous order, its atoms, worlds, and galaxies, and the infinite complexity of living creatures: Grant that, as we probe the mysteries of your creation, we may come to know you more truly, and more surely fulfill our role in your eternal purpose; in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen*

For the Conservation of Natural Resources

Almighty God, in giving us dominion over things on Earth, you made us fellow workers in your creation: Give us wisdom and reverence so to use the resources of nature, that no one may suffer from our abuse of them, and that generations yet to come may continue to praise you for your bounty; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

PRAYER OF CONFESSION *read aloud together*

Creator God, creator of all things in heaven and earth. We confess that we have taken your creation for granted. We have abused and misused our precious resources. We have not been diligent stewards of the land. Lord, grant us mercy, give us knowledge and make us aware of your presence in creation.

Silently pray, confess, repent

PRAYER OF ASSURANCE

The Lord is merciful to those who show mercy. This day, let us go forth with repentant hearts and changed lives. May we be moved to action and justice. May we always be reminded of God's love throughout creation. Now, we show forth God's love to one another and to the Earth. *Amen.*

PASSING OF THE PEACE

SUGGESTED HYMNS

All Creatures of Our God and King by John Rutter
All Things Bright and Beautiful by John Rutter
For the Beauty of the Earth by John Rutter
Hymn of Promise by Natalie A. Sleeth
Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow by Thomas Ken
Morning Has Broken by Eleanor Farjeon

TODAY'S LECTIONARY TEXTS *from The Revised Common Lectionary*

Acts 9:1-20
Psalm 30
Revelation 5:11-14
John 21:1-19

SENDING FORTH

May we leave this place radically changed. Let us not forget what our eyes have seen, our ears have heard, and what our hearts have felt. Bind us to one another and to creation. Lord, allow us to be agents of change throughout the world. Allow us to repair the atmosphere. *Blessings to each of you...Amen.*