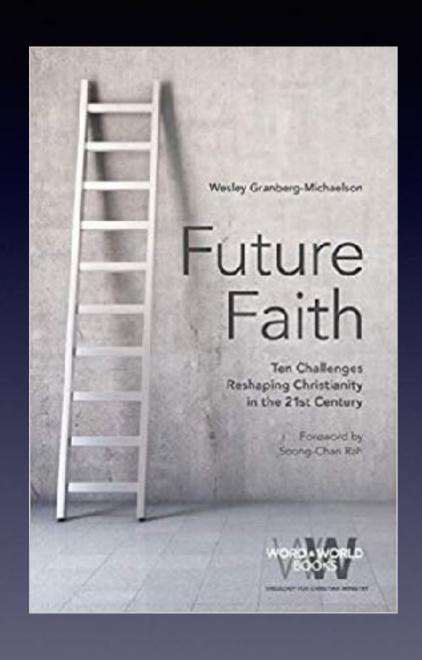
Future Faith



Holy Manners Bookstudy 44
ACTS - Winter 2020
St David's United Church, Calgary

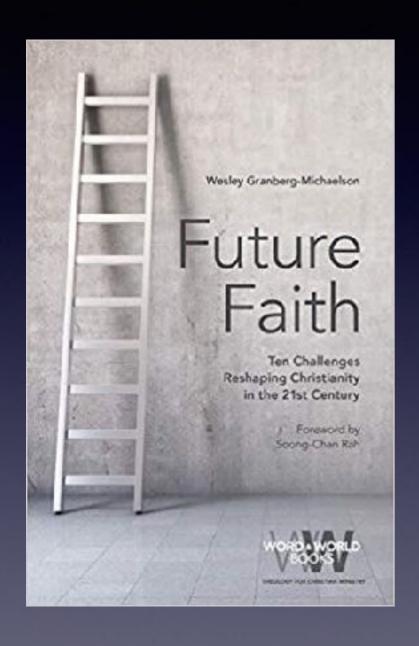
Session 5

Challenge 4:

Perceiving the World as Sacred

Session # 5

- Housekeeping Wayne
- Opening **
- Ch 4 Development Wayne
- Wayne's Videos Jock
- Hospitality Break
- The Great Chain Jock
- Discussion Brenda
- Closing **
- Appendices
 - Appx 1 Mike Grammer's Notes
 - Appx 2 Joan's Discussion Notes
 - Appx 3 Further iNet Resources

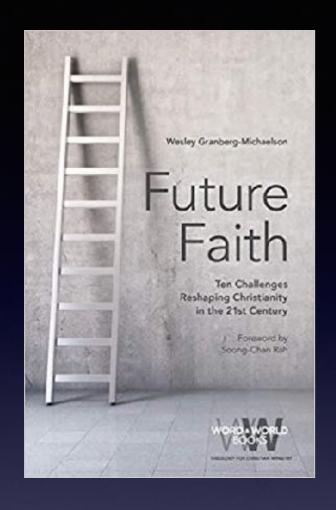


Housekeeping

Wayne



Opening





Chapter 4 "Perceiving the World as Sacred"

First Remarks:

Our study so far has focused on how our current world situation is forcing Christians and their churches in North America to recognize that our future - if we are to have one - must be very different from our past.

So, let's begin a "re-building" process!

Chapter 4 "Perceiving the World as Sacred"



- We have been introduced to some voices that we've ignored but can still have time to learn from.
- (two-thirds world, Indigenous, etc.)
- How did we get into the difficulties we now face?
- We have inherited good Christian teaching but have not allowed it to guide us adequately.

Chapter 4 "Perceiving the World as Sacred"



The Scope of this Session -

After a review of some classical Christian ideas and how they need to be re-interpreted today, we will listen to three current and prophetic voices who can help us do that and move hopefully into the future

Chapter 4 "Perceiving the World as Sacred"



We will build on the classic theological teachings of

Creation, Incarnation, and Redemption

and try to unpack them to be easier to understand.



Our Core Theme of the Evening - John 3:16

"For God loved the world so much that he gave (his) only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die, but have eternal life."



There, in a nutshell, are the key classic theological terms -

- Creation God, the Creator, loved the world.
- Incarnation God gave the world his Son Jesus (divine/human)
- Redemption Whoever believes in Jesus' way will gain eternal life -



What happened over the centuries?

- The spiritual world became separated from the material world (67)
- Creation was emptied of its sacred value (70)
- Nature became "disenchanted" "fallen" and "separated" from God (68)
- God was pushed to the margins secularized (69)
- The Protestant tradition did much to bring about this separation of sacred and secular (67)
- Redemption/Salvation became focused on individuals, not humanity, and not "all creation" (72)
- Science and faith went in opposing directions (79)



The result? We have reached a dead end.

A theological reconstruction of John 3:16 is needed (72)



We need to recover God's original intent -

- Human rebirth/renewal is fully linked to the renewal of creation.
- Personal salvation and cosmic renewal are integrated (an Orthodox Church teaching)
- Reject the secularization of nature to see all of creation aspiring to "eternal life".



Cosmic Renewal

- All can celebrate the "integrity" (inter-relatedness) of God's creation (76)
- Faith and ecology Christianity and science a partnership restored (79)
- Understanding these truths can transform our economic and political systems into a "sacred world" (83).

Chapter 4 "Perceiving the World as Sacred"



Our helpful contemporary guides are:

Pope Francis, Richard Rohr, and Sallie McFague

Our video presentations should help us go deeper. into their contemporary interpretations.



Top 10 Things You Need to Know about Pope Francis' Laudato Si' 4m22s

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_lqFTYLc_4



Why Green is the Color of God - Fr. Richard Rohr

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gbJR_1sXzDo



Sallie McFague: Caring for the Earth - The Body of God Reading last paragraph of her last book 4m39s

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6EGvp8RxJs





Challenge 4 - Perceiving the World as Sacred

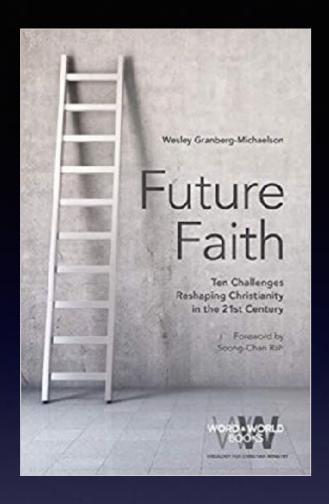
An excerpt from his appendix post.

"Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Fine. First, the beholder has to look. 'cause hell's carillons, you can find it anywhere if you look. While I still <love> Toronto, it has been a number of years since I considered it "beautiful".

Then, as I'm pulling up to the Bayview entrance on Lawrence street, I turn to the side---and see the most gorgeous sunset-scape---a deep ochre sun with sort of sheets of clouds kind of "backlighting" it. Ach, useless to describe. I almost crashed into a couple lightpoles as I drove up Bayview, utterly unable to tear my eyes away for more than a second and wishing to heaven that I'd brought my camera. And, for those moments, the city was truly beautiful.



Time now. Please return.





The Great Chain of Being

God's Order or Mankind's Own Way

Jock



A Prayer for our Earth from Laudato Si.

2m

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T3Qp2joenak



The Great Chain of Being/Natural Order/The Divine Right of Kings

The Great Chain of Being was a Christian idea that mapped out God's natural hierarchy to the world and all its living creatures. Minerals and other inanimate things in nature were at the bottom of the chain, below plants, insects, and other "less noble" creatures. In the animal kingdom, mighty beasts like lions (especially admired in England and France as war heroes were often given appellations like "lion-hearted"), bears, and wolves reigned supreme. But humans undoubtedly ranked above the rest of the flora and fauna. The king-who was apparently Godchosen, according to absolute doctrines like the Divine Right of Kings—and clergy were the most important human beings. God, obviously, was at the very top of The Great Chain of Being. Since this holy chain was established by almighty and powerful God, it was considered sinful to disturb it and doing so would ultimately result in chaos.

The Great Chain of Being

An Ancient Metaphor

Our oldest political structures were: "As above, so below." Plato and philosophers saw the world as a hierarchy with God over Man over Nature. This continued up to the enlightenment, when early science eliminated God, and that ended the divine order of things. But the Church stayed with this Divine Heirarchy.

A Renewed Idea

Arthur Lovejoy of Harvard in 1933 rejuvenated the ancient hierarchy of God over Man over Nature. Lovejoy promoted its principles of plenitude, continuity and graduation. Richard Rohr has renewed the idea again, though those 3 principles are badly broken today.

Religion and Secularity

Something In Common

Both Religious and Secular folk have always seen themselves in charge of the world - and that the strong could to do as they would. In consequence, the world has become a place of unrestrained competition and exploitation. And is on the verge of breaking badly.

A New Perspective

In just the last half century, many Religious Institutions and Secular Societies have come to understand that mankind is in a multi-dimensional emergency. We need again to be nature's keeper, and tend to the critical problems of our own making that threaten all life. We need to return to the Garden.



A Secular View

In 1962, Rachel Carson wrote "Silent Spring". She presented a secular vision of what was urgently wrong with the world, and awakened modern ecology. Her voice continues the call to action.

"The control of nature is a phrase conceived in arrogance, born of the Neanderthal age of biology and the convenience of man."

"Future generations are unlikely to condone our lack of prudent concern for the integrity of the natural world that supports all life."

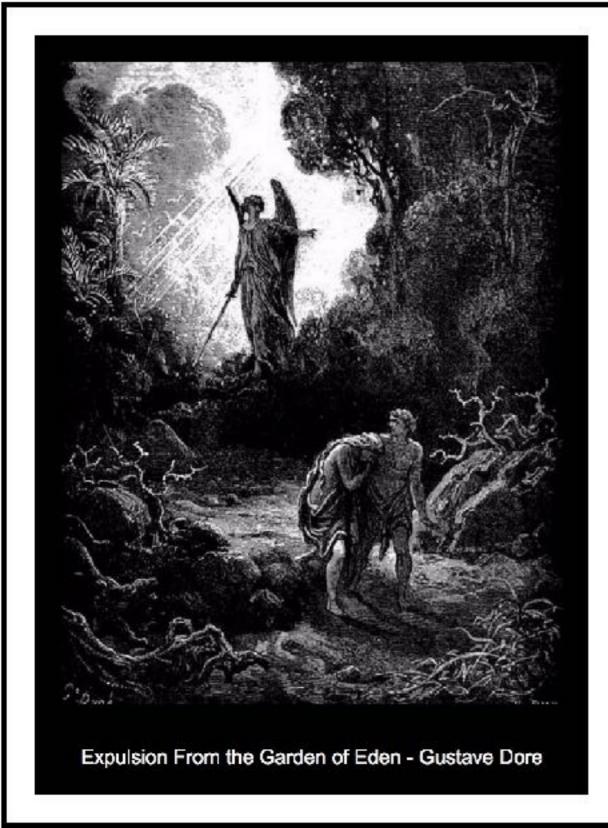


Environmentalists and the Garden of Eden I Jordan B Peterson

Peterson finds the biblical story key to our understanding, and adding a religious dimension the environmentalists lack.

3m10s

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xIN-KyrU7aA



credo 2 - intention

we ever wish the life of simple trusting believing submission is its key, and willing to suppress our knowing.

for eden's story was of submission that truth was trust in its simplicity, and wanting to know more was rebellion.

there is a nexus of awareness that has no name that has given the human race it's illuminated ones, through insight, conversion, and dark nights of the soul.

they describe not submission but relationship these saints, these avatars, these prophets, do not believe, but come to know we are not alone.

for good action comes from clear intention, where compassion guides understanding.

http://1journey.net/1journey/Kirk/credo2.htm

A musing on that core religious principle of submission to authority. And of consequences. And of listening to Prophets not Kings. The ones that tell us we are not alone. ... jock



The Garden of Eden

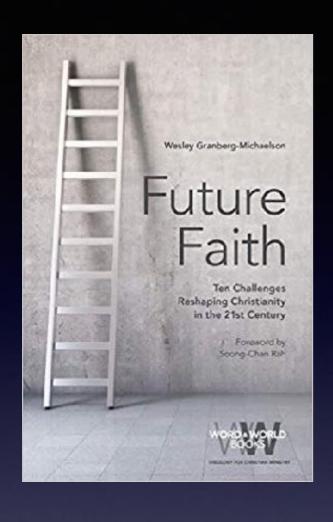
God's Order or Man's Own Way

Well, we no longer tend the Garden. The story goes, we were expelled because we wanted to know things. And would not blindly obey those in power when they told us they spoke for God. But our industrious independence and our secular inattention to "gardening", has now spoiled the world badly.

YET

Our many present crises are forcing needed change. Our mega-systems are providing a fusion of ideas.

It is "2 minutes to midnight". It is time for a return to Eden.



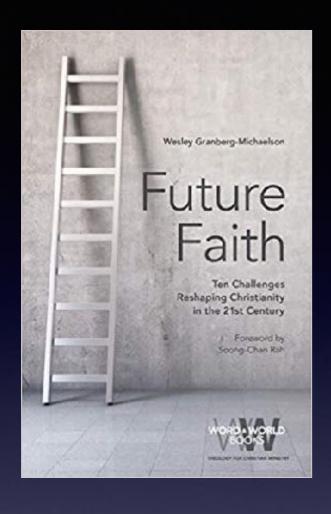
Some Thoughts on Challenge 4:

Perceiving the World as Sacred

Brenda

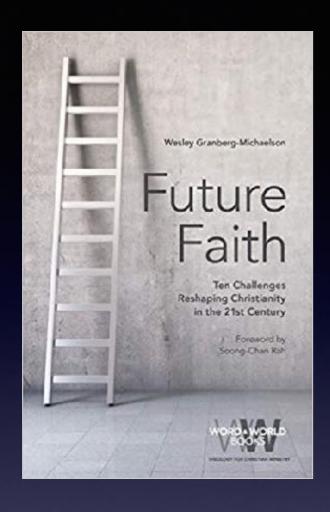


Rich though we be as consumers, as creatures who belong, body and soul to the cosmos, we are paupers.
... Larry Rasumssen





- Discuss Do you agree with Rasmussen?
- What historical developments in both society and the church have had an impact on how we view the sacred or holy in our modern world?
 - Evening Compline service Karen Armstrong
 - Richard Rohr: page 82,83
 - "Perceiving the world as God's cathedral." p.84





Discussion

Final Thoughts on Challenge 4:

Perceiving the World as Sacred

Brenda

Next Readings

Session 6 - 24 Feb 2020

Challenge 5:
Affirming Spirit-Filled Communities

Study Website sduc.ca

Closing - Brenda



Therefore, Christianity must once again learn to perceive the sacred world.

Wendall Berry, farmer and writer, offers his poetic wisdom restoring humanity's links to the good earth.

The Peace of Wild Things https://vimeo.com/74755473

Perceiving the World as Sacred: Nose Hill

History

Nose Hill is a remaining example of the high plains which once covered this area. Ancient rivers, successive glaciers and their run-off have eroded the landscape producing the surrounding valleys and lowlands, leaving the two hills towering over the area. The park contains significant archaeological sites, including stone circles. These were formed by using stones to hold down the edges of tipis and are called "tipi rings". Because of its height, the hill was also a sacred place used for ceremonies and burials. In the '80s, much of the park was destined for residential development.

However, vigorous citizen action saved the land for the magnificent park we have today. Nancy Hetherington-Pierce, former St. Davidian, worked valiantly to save our hill. I remember her standing in the foyer with her clipboard, seeking signatures to present to city hall. Our Hill was saved.

THE LEGEND OF KNOWSHILL A journey for the soul.

In ancient cultures, the people walked Sacred Journeys to enact and remember their mythical and spiritual ways.

The Legend of Knows Hill is such a Journey, experienced through walking the sacred site of Nose Hill.

A story unfolds rich in symbolism and metaphors seen through the eyes and imagination of Chris Smith.

A mythical Journey filled with the wonder of nature, music, fun, memorable moments and delightful treasures.

The Adventure, Power, and Beauty of Nose Hill awaits you!

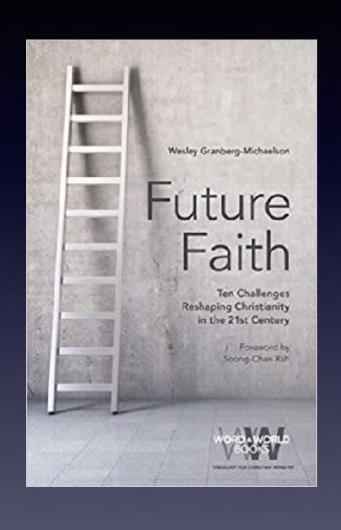


1500 BC Old Thera, Santorini, Greeo

Maidens gathering crocuses for ceremonial procession on Sacred Hill.







Appendices

Discussion Notes - Joan Gray

Chapter Notes - Mike Grammar

Further Resource Links - Jock McTavish



Challenge 4 - Perceiving the World as Sacred

- PERCEIVING THE WORLD AS SACRED
- 67 bottom 68, severing spirit from the material world. I don't know how apposite this is, but a more recent entry of mine in the Chronicles (for new readers, my ongoing diary):
 - o "having recently not only experienced magic but even helped to create it, I think any supposition that magic is "possibility made real" has it all backwards. Isn't magic reality made possible? Isn't it, truly, something that occurs that lets reality actually happen, that lets us not deceive or defend ourselves but believe, accept, surrender? Maybe I skirt a little dangerously close to the ideas Father Richard Rohr expresses in Immortal Diamond, but for me the connection between a true feeling of awe and the feeling that I am having a true, unadulterated, undeceived moment or experience is one I would choose not to ignore."
- 70 top, protestant "asceticism" and the "holiness" of work. Good observations. We're clearly headed in this direction, so my long-ish treatise from the Chronicles is set out below, the point to jump off maybe being that nature can instead function as the connector between the spiritual and the material. Because in my world, although perceiving beauty is indeed personal, it also usually has to come with a sense of awe or otherworldliness, a departure from the mundane and rigours of the world we find ourselves in:
 - o "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Fine. First, the beholder has to look. 'cause hell's carillons, you can find it anywhere if you look. While I still <love> Toronto, it has been a number of years since I considered it "beautiful". Then, as I'm pulling up to the Bayview entrance on Lawrence street, I turn to the side---and see the most gorgeous sunset-scape---a deep ochre sun with sort of sheets of clouds kind of "backlighting" it. Ach, useless to describe. I almost crashed into a couple lightpoles as I drove up Bayview, utterly unable to tear my eyes away for more than a second and wishing to heaven that I'd brought my camera. And, for those moments, the city was truly beautiful.



Challenge 4 - Perceiving the World as Sacred

- o Beauty's all around us---in the people we meet, the places we go, the flowers we see. And I dunno whether we take it for granted or we don't <want> to enjoy it, but I see people sometimes shying away, blanching from the beauty around them. They don't want to look. Maybe this is the residue of the Celestine Prophecy stuff still kicking around in my brain, but I do wonder...are we all afraid of believing in beauty? Or is it the forbidden fruit syndrome? I'm not endorsing unadulterated---or adulterous sybarism (is that even a word? Eek. "Sybarity"?). Nor am I advocating the "see beauty in everything". Because that's just fooling yourself. But I don't endorse the flatbread approach to life either. What I am saying is, that for this subject of beauty, there's a lot more, let's call it "potential energy" out there that we can convert than most of us think about.
- o For instance, I finally decided to get an enlargement done of one of my Spain pics, in this case the Alcazar in Seville. Took it into the framer's, we discussed, as we always do, the matting and frame and I left it with him. He carts it out for me 3 days later....and my breath almost left my body. It was stunning, a masterpiece. It was BEAUTIFUL. And I took that moment (because if you're smart, the moment of "unveiling", of "discovery" is the most precious and beautiful of all) and absolutely savoured every last drop. Why don't more people do it? It's so bloody rewarding to our poor overborne souls. "
- 70, middle, so the thing is....while there is a sort of purity to work and certainly often a purposefulness to it, there is *not* often a humanity to it. It is an ice-crystal purity, an often sterile one, without the colour of the engagement of the empathic side of ourselves. Not always, mind you, but the exceptions are true exceptions.
- 71, inbred throughout the Old Testament is admonishment to be thankful for the bounty of the land, to let a field lie fallow to allow it to recover. To share and replenish. And intertwined are stories of the wicked---who eat fruit they shouldn't, who use what nature has provided for their own selfish purposes, etc. So the understanding seems pretty clear even back 3,000 years ago.



Challenge 4 - Perceiving the World as Sacred

- 72, I have spoken before of the overarching Jewish precept of "tikkun olam"—the repair of the world. That involves repairing people and repairing depredations of nature.
- 73, top, that is *really* interesting thought!
- 73, middle, intimating that we've gone from earth-centre-of-universe to earth-tiny-point-of-universe, to individual-is-centre-of-his/her own universe.
- 74-75, the pope writes really beautifully
- 78-79, top, admirable, but----were any indigenous peoples invited? It is from them that *learning* by the Christian faith could have been done at the time, no?
- 79 bottom 80 OK, so they got there and beyond at the Norwegian gathering, good
- 82, Christ the union of matter and spirit. OK....but did that view actually germinate the ideas of the enlightenment itself? If Jesus was, in fact, a man---an individual....even though the son of God....did that not "light the way" for each and every individual human to achieve this state on their own? Food for thought
- 83, full bookshelves. I hope he'll get to the fact that bookshelves are NOT where this hoped-for change is going to be catalyzed. As part of its survival, surely Christianity must cool up, must take to the electronic stage in full force
- 83, middle, OK, yeah, but lift up your head, o ye gates and be ye lifted up. 20 years ago it probably was less than 1%

-



Challenge 4 - Perceiving the World as Sacred

- 1. I honestly don\t feel like giving a full summation. The piece that caught my attention the most was the puritanical holiness of work and how that further expostulated the Enlightenment.
- 2. I don't know if I'm equipped to say, for the very reasons that he is setting out in this book---that my own worldview is so Western-dominated. But within my Western "community"? I would agree on a macro scale. As I've written above, about beauty, I've myself tried to be a little less poor that way
- 3. The Orthodox denomination, which was a surprise to me---albeit I know very, very little about their practices. Indigenous are again mentioned, and those secular people who are concentrating on the environment. In the sense that the answer has to come from a broad sociographic spectrum of humanity, I am onboard with that assertion
- 4. ____fractured but still beautiful.
- 5. I will confess—I'm starting to get a little impatient with waiting for him to fuse the observations and learnings that the southern hemisphere and the orient has for Western Christianity. I know/hope he's setting the stage for some bold statements.

-

Discussion Notes By Joan Gray - 10 February 2020 - P1

St David's Book Study - Future Faith Ten Challenges Reshaping Christianity in the 21 st Century by Wesley Granberg-Michaelson

Care of the Earth.

After Cheryl Campbell's opening and reading the children's book Grandad's Prayers of the Earth by Douglas Wood, their were lots of comments about the wonderfulness of growing up around nature (Banff AB, Revelestoke BC, Morley AB), on farms, around animals, rivers, streams and the earth.

The news today is reporting on a conflict right now in BC with First Nations people and the protest of freight cars with fuel going through their spiritual lands.

Comment - Fishing with his Dad became his own family's fishing trips. Very sacred moments in nature. (God's Country. It is all God's Country.)

Comment- Raised on a farm. Their was a sense that farmers feel their job is to take care of the earth. Stewards of the earth. Farming has changed. No more fallowing fields. Use of fertilizer instead. Same fields now grow 5 times as much grain as 50 years ago. Comment that the same nutritive value is not there because of high yields.

Discussion around Creation, Incarnation, Redemption.

John Chapter 3 verse 16 was read.

Comments: The words of John regarding exclusiveness. The tribes of exclusiveness have grown over the centuries from small groups to millions of people. Comment that we are all sons and daughters of Jesus. The question was asked; What about the rest of the non Christian world? Comment that the words were written for those people, not the world now. Words were to give the people hope.

A story of someone talking to a former prisoner of the El Salvatore regime. The authorities didn't mind so much the fundamentalists there because they just believed they were going to a better place after (death.) The rest of the Christians, there were concerns about. They felt they had to fix things now.

Comment - Passages from the Bible can be re-interpreted over time.

Discussion Notes By Joan Gray - 10 February 2020 - P1

St David's Book Study - Future Faith Ten Challenges Reshaping Christianity in the 21 st Century by Wesley Granberg-Michaelson

Reformation: We were kicked out of the Garden of Eden because we wanted to know.

Comment - How do we fit Adam and Eve into evolution; dinosaurs? (New dinosaur discovery in Alberta just recently.)

Comment - There is a struggle with John 3:16.

Pope Francis, Richard Rohr and Sally McFague videos shown.

Jock: Image of the Garden of Eden. Something seems not quite right. We were exiled from it because we wanted to think for ourselves.

Videos: Pope Francis poem, The Great Chain of Being, Rachel Carson 1962 book, Silent Spring, Jordan Peterson.

Comment - Education key, is under attack.

Comment - Author showed well how the church and science separated. Names such as Francis Bacon, Isaac Newton, and Adam Smith (The Wealth of Nations) were mentioned.

Pope Francis has criticized the pollution of even outer space. There is lots of stuff up there now.

The pipeline conflicts and our Alberta Premier Jason Kenney were mentioned.

Comment - The quote from Saint Bonaventure describing God on page 74 was felt that it summed up the chapter eloquently.

Comment - There is a sense from her grown children that they are more clued into nature and our impact on it than perhaps our own generation. They don't want as much stuff.

Comment - If I had not bought the sweater or shoes that I am wearing I would not have them. I cannot make shoes or knit a sweater. You have to buy some things.

Comment - There is a balance of conscious consumerism.

Comment - Sometimes Capitalism can be the whipping boy.

Closing by Brenda

Next Monday, Feb 17, no Book Study (Family Day.) We meet next Feb 24, 2020. Challenge 5 Affirming Spirit Filled Communities

Further Resource Links - p1:

LAUDATO SI' - Care For Our Common Home - 184 page pdf

- http://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si_en.pdf
- The Encyclical Letter itself

Laudato Si' - A Canadian Response - 36m

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bti86O_Tw5A
- This video presents the views of nine prominent (and soon to be prominent) Canadians among whom are David Suzuki, Maude Barlow, Silver Don Cameron and Gregor Robertson as they reflect on the Encyclical. 23 excerpts from Laudato Si' help the viewer read the actual words of the 192 page document.

The Great Chain of Being - A Meditation - Article - 1 page

- https://myemail.constantcontact.com/Richard-Rohr-s-Meditation--The-Great-Chain-of-Being.html?soid=1103098668616&aid=4vyF5-Snk5Y
- Rohr talks about good points to "medieval metaphor". Circle of life. Recognizes the sacred in nature.

Divine DNA Found in Great Chain of Being - Fr. Richard Rohr - Article.

- https://chqdaily.com/2019/07/divine-dna-found-in-great-chain-of-being-fr-richard-rohr-says/
- Chautauqua. The church fathers wrote about the great chain of being. The chain began with finding the divine in the Earth, the firmament, then in plants, trees and animals, then humans, then angels, then the divinity.
- "Notice that humans are only one link in the chain," Rohr said. "Once the chain is broken, we have stopped honoring the divine presence in any link. The link was broken in humans and we believe we have found it only in a few of us, and we have developed thousands of reasons to exclude others."

Laudato Si' - A Canadian Response - 35:55

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bti86O_Tw5A
- This video presents the views of nine prominent (and soon to be prominent) Canadians among whom are David Suzuki, Maude Barlow, Silver Don Cameron and Gregor Robertson as they reflect on the Encyclical.
- 23 excerpts from Laudato Si' help the viewer read the actual words of the 192 page document.

ENCYCLICAL LETTER LAUDATO SI' - CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME - 184 page pdf.

- http://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco 20150524 enciclica-laudato-si en.pdf
- The document itself.

Further Resource Links - p2:

Laudato Si' - A Canadian Response - 36m

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bti86O_Tw5A
- This video presents the views of nine prominent (and soon to be prominent) Canadians among whom are David Suzuki, Maude Barlow, Silver Don Cameron and Gregor Robertson as they reflect on the Encyclical. 23 excerpts from Laudato Si' help the viewer read the actual words of the 192 page document.

Divine DNA Found in Great Chain of Being, Fr. Richard Rohr Says ... article.

- https://chqdaily.com/2019/07/divine-dna-found-in-great-chain-of-being-fr-richard-rohr-says/
- Chatauquan Daily Article The church fathers wrote about the great chain of being. The chain began with finding the divine in the Earth, the firmament, then in plants, trees and animals, then humans, then angels, then the divinity.
- "Notice that humans are only one link in the chain," Rohr said. "Once the chain is broken, we have stopped honoring the divine presence in any link. The link was broken in humans and we believe we have found it only in a few of us, and we have developed thousands of reasons to exclude others."

4 short video cuts on Sallie McFague - 3m

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sy4jDxCNXh8 47s
 - Dr. Sallie McFague suggests the overwhelming issues of building peace and caring for the environment can be envisioned more manageably as creating a guilt, to which each of us contributes a small piece.
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-dEZuaadQ4o 47s
 - Theologian Sallie McFague says we need to have the vocation in mind of the well being of the planet.
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x6AUeGTNiNc 27s
 - One of the great things about the common creation story is that we are the end result we really belong here, heart mind and soul, says theologian Sallie McFague.
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eJcFg3RHBGc 16s
 - The First World should not set the agenda, but should bear the burden and the costs of environmental issues, says Theologian Sallie McFague.

Faith Leaders Facing the Eco Crisis - 6m

• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mrkQd8b45ll

Dalai Lama - Mind and Life XXIII - Session 5 - Ecology, Ethics and Interdependence - 1:34:14

• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_NDSt7XeO8w

Dalai Lama - Can Buddhist theology help save us from climate disaster? The Dalai Lama thinks so. article

• https://tricycle.org/magazine/dalai-lama-on-climate-change/ 4