

Friends of the Center

Creation and Redemption

When was the last time you enjoyed God's peace at dawn? Or the whisper of God's voice in the rain? Do you remember the last time you watched a starry night? Can you recognize the song of the birds or a tree by the perfume of its flowers?

In times of such uncertainty, the certainty of a new dawn should represent God's goodness and mercy in each morning God gives us. In times of anxiety, exploitation, and oppression, the time or rest that the night is supposed to provide us should speak to us of the care and rest we find in God.

In times when everything around us seems to make us sick –or is sickening us– the scent of flowers and the softness of oil on our foreheads should remind us that with everything God created, we can also find the healing and well-being with which they made us in its image and likeness.

Jesus's crucifixion, which we recently commemorated, is a clear reminder of God's care for creation, both human and nonhuman. This care also translates into salvation, redemption, and reconciliation, for creation waits, with pain and groaning, for us to finally demonstrate that we are God's children (Romans 8:19-23). Not the people who, through our disobedience and arrogance, also harm creation as a consequence of human sin (Genesis 3:17-19, Isaiah 24:4-6, Hosea 4:1-6), but the people who have understood our responsibility to care for and help heal all that God created good, whole, balanced, and healthy (Genesis 2:15, Leviticus 25, Matthew 6:25-31).

Let's go back to the day of the crucifixion for a moment. Let's think about those things that touched Jesus' body and caused it to bleed before the final moment of his death on the cross. The whip, the crown of thorns, the wood, the nails, the soldier's sword, the dirt at Christ's feet: all these elements coming from nature were receptacles for Christ's blood. The whip could have been made of leather, with pieces of bone at the end, recalling the animals created by God. The crown of thorns and the wood of the cross are of plant origin, recalling the wild plants, trees, and all kinds of vegetation that God created with such love. The metal of the nails and the soldier's sword, in addition to the earth, remind us of all those nonliving and nonhuman elements God created equally. The whole of Creation also needs to be freed from the consequences of human sin and return to enjoy God's original purpose: that all may be good!

Beyond participating in our community's recycling program –if we have one– or trying to reduce the amount of trash we generate or the things we buy we don't need, let's return to observe Creation and feel part of it again. On



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our walks, trips to the market, or in parks, let's rediscover why the psalmist could exclaim that the heavens declare the glory of God or why Solomon, even in all his majesty, could not dress like the wildflowers. Let's try to take care of a plant or an animal, participate in a community garden, or support local farmers. With these small actions, we can also rediscover the greatness of God and draw closer to divinity. Because, according to Colossians 1:20, Jesus's death on the cross was also intended to reconcile all created things in heaven and earth so that we might live in peace.

– Kelmadis Pérez Rivera



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