

Last year our Earthcare group asked Bishop Mary how we might encourage other churches to get more involved with Creation Care, and she suggested that we organize a conference for the diocese. That conference happened yesterday in Salinas, and for the last week we have been hosting the keynote speaker, Margaret Bullitt-Jonas. Margaret, who has been a long time climate activist, is Missioner for Creation Care for the Diocese of Western Massachusetts.

During this week on the Central Coast she has been sharing a model for living in the midst of the challenges of climate change and this morning I want to share it with you. I think we all struggle with the reality that our planet is changing and it's hard to live with that reality so this is a way to think about how we can remain grounded and connected with God even as the news gets worse and climate change starts to seriously impact our lives.

This way of being has three parts – the awakened heart, the broken heart and the radiant heart. The awakened heart is the heart that Jesus is talking about in this morning's reading – the heart that knows that we are deeply loved. That knows that God loved the cosmos so much that he sent his Son, his very self, to become human for the redemption of Creation. And that includes us. And Jesus tells us that the Creator God knows us all as individuals and loves us deeply.

One of the joys of this week for me has been spending time with Barry as we accompanied Margaret to Salinas and spent a couple of days together. On the way home, Barry explained to me that it took billions of years for the cosmos to develop the kind of planet with the very elements that could sustain life and evolve life, critters and eventually humankind. So whereas I had been thinking how insignificant we are in this vast interstellar space, he turned that around for me and helped me

see how astonishing it is that we are here at all, and what love the Creator had to make all that happen.

The awakened heart is in touch with that deep love and open to receiving the love of God in every breath. Let's take a few moments now to practice. Close your eyes if you will, and focus on your breathing. And as you breathe in, breathe in the love of God. Feel that love coming into you filling your lungs, filling your heart. With every breath, breathe in love and as you breathe out send that love to another.

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Our hearts are awakened whenever and however we experience or remember the love of God. There are practices that help us to expand that awareness – taking time in creation, the practice of gratitude, reading and pondering scripture, participating in the Eucharist. I encourage you to think about the things that awaken your heart with love and practice them. Because that is our fundamental reality. God is love. God loves us, and we need to be rooted and grounded in that love as we connect with the second stage – the broken heart.

I know many of your hearts are broken as you think about the world that your grandchildren will inherit. For me, not having grandchildren, I think of the suffering of those homeless in the Bahamas with another storm coming in. I think of puffin chicks dying of starvation because the fish their parents bring them are not the ones their bills were made for and so they cannot swallow them. I think of the burning forests and the creatures running for their lives. I think of the extinction of species and particularly the loss of insects. You will have your own list of things you can hardly bear to think about. These are things that break our hearts.

It's difficult for us to think about these things, but if we fail to acknowledge our broken hearts then we become paralyzed and

depressed. If we choose to live in the awakened heart and ignore our broken hearts they will not go away – they just eat at us. Many of us choose to live as climate change deniers – not because we believe that nothing is happening, but because we cannot bear to think about it and it makes us feel helpless.

But the broken heart can be the springboard for the radiant heart just as the crucifixion led to the resurrection. It is the broken heart empowered by the awakened heart that moves us into action.

And action is necessary. We may find it difficult to have hope for the future, but we must have courage. For our own sake, for our grandchildren's sake, and for the sake of the critters of the planet, we must have courage and that courage will lead to action.

The radiant heart is the heart that gives from that place of awakened love moved by the broken heart. Remember how we are told that Jesus looked on someone with compassion, and was moved to teach or to heal? That is the radiant heart at work.

It is the radiant heart which participates in tangible actions that will make a difference. Margaret quoted someone who said “There is only one of me and I can't do much but I can do something, and so let me do the something that I can do.” or words to that effect.

We can all do something. 40% of greenhouse gases come from the way households live – from our cars and other transport, from our heating and lighting, from our waste, and from what we eat. The way we live does make a difference, and when it is added to what our neighbor does it can quickly mount up. so the radiant heart, filled with the love of God for creation leads us to make changes in our lifestyle.

And the radiant heart leads us to participate in the public square – leads us to engage in civic conversation and civic action. In order to keep the planet livable, humanity has to make massive changes. Our leaders have to understand that this is of vital importance to us. Important as others things are, if we get this wrong everything else will turn out to be re-arranging the chairs on the Titanic.

The radiant heart does not engage in anger or bitterness. The radiant heart does not demonize those with whom it disagrees. The radiant heart gives love even as it moves forward with courage.

Each of these stages – the awakened heart, the broken heart and the radiant heart may happen simultaneously – or we may be strongly aware of one or another. Together they give us balance like the persons of the Trinity dancing together. Together they lead us forward into the new world.