



Loretto Earth Network News

DRAWDOWN

Spring 2018

Vol. 26, No. 1

Return to the Story of the Universe

Interview with Miriam MacGillis, OP

LEN: I'm personally intrigued by the practice of centering prayer and what it offers us in terms of leaving behind our internal (and externalized) either/or processing – and putting on a new mind of perceiving from the whole instead of the parts. I see this as important because, as attributed to Einstein, we cannot solve problems from the same level of consciousness that created them.

MIRIAM: Yes, but the “outer world” that Einstein was observing with modern scientific instruments gave him a context which looked very different from the worldview held by people living in earlier periods of history. So, his outer perceptions provided new ways of solving the problems created by earlier generations.

Simply attending to inner insights without any reference to the changed realizations about the outer world (universe, Earth, continental formation, geology, chemistry, physics, etc) may continue to perpetuate the present dysfunctional behavior of what some humans and institutions are doing. For example, the revelations of earlier saints and sages do not necessarily provide insights into the 85,000 new synthetic chemicals which were only created in the last century yet are threatening life itself. These chemicals did not even exist at the time of the traditional mystics. I would be cautious in suggesting that centering



Miriam MacGillis, OP

prayer alone will solve our present problems although I surely believe that it can help us to tame our egos, with their unconscious fears and projections....

Thomas Berry said we should put the bible as well as the sacred texts of all religious traditions on the shelf for ten years. He never said they should be abandoned or discredited. Rather he suggested that none of them should be considered the primary or absolute revelation of the divine. He suggested that the new understandings about the origin and nature of the Universe were a more comprehensive revelation of the divine and included the diverse

religious expressions of our human species. He believed that these new realizations could be better integrated when religions reinterpreted the meanings of their sacred texts – to include what their founders could not have known.

Though he wrote that more than ten years ago, the Abrahamic traditions have been somewhat sluggish in following his advice. The Story of the Universe gives us the context of the whole from which we can most faithfully attend to our human tradition of faith and address the problems that face us now.

LEN: What are the problems that face us now?

MIRIAM: The unraveling of the Earth's one “garment of life.” The destruction of Earth's very life capacities would have been unimaginable to the mystics and prophets of earlier times. Yet so much of the destruction has come from “advanced” Western cultures. You can find the seeds of this dysfunction reflected in the worldview behind the stories and meanings woven into the narratives of the Genesis tradition. A central legacy of this creation story is the belief that suffering, death, constraint, struggle are an aberration to the order intended by God, and humans can merit a deliverance from these conditions. Now or later. And it assumes that God breathed an individual transcendent

Continued on page 3



Editor's Note:

Libby Comeaux CoL

at LEN's 25th Anniversary Celebration in Denver in 2016, moderated reports from a youthful ecumenical group facilitating climate-saving steps by faith-based communities worldwide. They plan to participate in the *Global Climate Action Summit* this September in San Francisco. As described on its website, the 2018 Summit "will bring together leaders from state and local governments, business, and citizens from around the world, to demonstrate how the tide has turned in the race against climate change, showcase climate action taking place around the world, and inspire deeper commitments from each other and from national governments – in support of the Paris Agreement."

The *United States Climate Alliance*, now sixteen states strong, represents \$7.4 trillion of the US GDP and 40% of the U.S. population whose political leaders pledge to achieve Paris climate goals. Similarly, last June 391 U.S. *Climate Mayors* representing another cross-section, over 20% of U.S. population, pledged their local commitment. Last June, Loretto Earth Network publicly supported the Paris Accord "as we reaffirm our own sacred commitment to the preservation of God's creation on Planet Earth." Groups such as Accelerate Neighborhood Climate Action, facilitated through the Institute for Cultural Affairs, are forming to commit at the person-to-person level and hold these government actors to their pledges. Now in addition, we can engage with faith-based climate-saving action groups like *Green Faith* as we continue to take specific steps for the regeneration of Earth and communicate our commitment.

Thank you to each of our contributors to this issue, for helping us taste the nitty-gritty of *Drawdown* and remember how much is possible when one little ant decides to carry water, and a lot of other

This issue touches ground again on the wisdom foundations of the Loretto Earth Network. We studied *New Cosmology* with Miriam Therese MacGillis, who now reminds us to revisit that exploration. We learned from Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme that the Universe has a Story, energized by a fundamentally trinitarian process. Jane Blewett describes "the three 'central ordering tendencies' that permeate the total evolutionary process of the universe: differentiation (diversity, complexity, variation, disparity); autopoiesis (subjectivity, sentience, identity, self-manifestation); and communion (interrelatedness, mutuality, kinship, complementarity)."

We who emerge from the Universe and live by the bounty and fragrance of Earth do well to live in resonance with this fundamental Trinitarian reality. The approach of contemplative priest Cynthia Bourgeault provides an interesting viewpoint on how some of our inner work might proceed. I personally love her ability to transcend an either/or dichotomy by seeing from within the whole. Sonja Earthman Novo's reflection brings us to our small and resonant place within a large unfolding Universe.

In this issue, we consider climate actions we can take from that small and resonant place. Some of us attended a one-hour webinar on January 29, available on YouTube as *Green Faith 2018 International Briefing*. Fletcher Harper, who joined us

Coordinators Loretto Earth Network

Beth Blissman CoL
Libby Comeaux CoL
Mary Ann Coyle SL - Emeritus
Maureen Fiedler SL
Mike Leard CoL
Maureen McCormack SL
Jessie Rathburn CoL
Nancy Wittwer SL
Marcus Hyde - Intern
Earna Volk - Intern

Loretto Earth Network News

A publication of the
Loretto Community

Editor: Libby Comeaux CoL
1663 Steele St Apt 901
Denver, CO 80206

Email: libby.comeaux@gmail.com
www.lorettocommunity.org

Layout: Nancy Wittwer SL

Studying

The Story of the Universe

The eleven Powers of the Universe can be streamed online through www.storyoftheuniverse.org. And the one-hour Journey of the Universe has Brian Swimme giving his artistic and accessible summary, enhanced by scenes from Greece, at the same website.

Journey of the Universe – The Unfolding of Life, presented by scholars familiar with Thomas Berry's body of work, is a free, six-week online course that introduces the emergence of human and other species as integral to the Universe's own story. www.coursera.org

Continued from page 1

Return to the Story of the Universe

soul into every human but not to the rest of the cosmos or to anything in the natural world. This belief has contributed immensely to the sense of separation and entitlement that is part of the cultural identity of the human within the Abrahamic traditions.

LEN: Where are you putting your focus these days at Genesis Farm?

MIRIAM: Our focus is our own bioregion, the Delaware-Hudson-River Water Basin. Climate change is barreling down on us with consequences for which we are totally unprepared and largely unaware. Extreme food shortages are on the horizon, and very few political or community leaders are paying attention. Through focusing on food and agriculture these forty years I have tried to accept the challenge that there can be little hope for the planet feeding eight billion people and all its other species, without many more people personally involved in growing food for their families and communities in the bioregions where they live.

LEN: How would you approach that dilemma?

MIRIAM: What if we re-sacralize the miracle of seeds, microbes, soil, and photosynthesis? That could be a spiritual, a contemplative process! Participation in the miracle of cultivating food would be esteemed as a sacred calling, not a demoted status. As Wendell Berry would say, we are working on re-sacralizing farming which embeds such beauty, joy, inspiration, sustenance, and pleasure. That's where the contemplative life should focus now. It should also liberate the idea that hard, demanding physical work is punishment from which humans need redemption.

LEN: Is it important for us to work on reducing our own individual and communal carbon impact, despite our apparent failures to achieve the system-wide transformation so many of us have sought?

MIRIAM: We must always weigh our personal choices against their impact on the whole. What good does it do to get on an airplane for any good purpose, if by getting on that airplane

your carbon emissions are making it more likely for humans to fail because of planetary implosion? *The Powers of the Universe* is an important video series by Brian Swimme. I recommend viewing it again! Life is always oriented towards the continuation of life.

LEN: Where do you find hope?

MIRIAM: Everywhere that the refusal to accept the status quo of oppression in all its forms is rising. Women are saying the dysfunctional system of patriarchy is over. The majority of people are not Caucasian, and they are standing up to be heard. There is an empowerment of the spirit rising throughout the planet against the institutional injustice perpetuated as normal or Manifest Destiny. It is an awakening and it has been a long time coming. It has required a more mature understanding of patriarchal assumptions that infected the classical traditions. Committing to the study of the Story of the Universe will help us as we move through the unsteady times ahead, with a more expanded sense of our call to live a committed life for the common good.

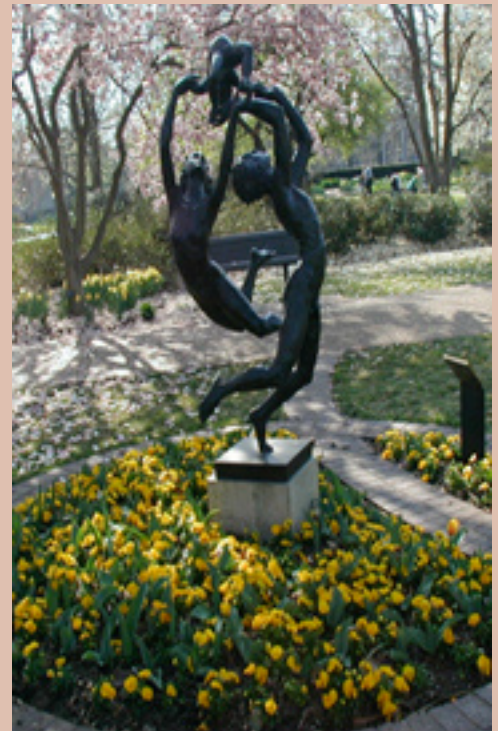
We are not alone!

On January 20, 2018, *Creed Politico* reported that the Bardstown SCNs have set their U.S. goal at zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2037 and zero waste. Their "green team" got the University of Kentucky to teach them how to do their own energy audit and decide which steps to take first.

The *Brentwood CSJs* have installed a *solar array project* in accord with their Land Ethic; it will provide 63% of the campus' energy needs, revegetate the land, and stimulate the larger transition to renewable energy through networking and leveraging opportunities with religious and service organizations across Long Island.

The Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati are working toward net-zero energy at their motherhouse, beginning with solar panel installation on six residential buildings. <http://www.srcharitycinti.org>

Daughters of Charity Province of St. Louis responded to *climate change* by getting an audit of their Provincial Office in St. Louis, Missouri, a 30,000 square foot building. They "walked their talk" by adding LED lighting, a TPO roof, and solar array installation. They now power the entire building with solar, alternating seamlessly with the utility company when necessary. www.sistersofcharityfederation.org



THE MIGHTY ANT

A Reflection by Sonja Earthman Novo, CoL

Cynthia Bourgeault speaks of the planet with transformed love. In a recent LCWR interview based on her book *The Holy Trinity and the Law of Three*, she speaks of the imaginal realm of our reality, not the imaginary. The imaginal realm is difficult to define and more difficult to

live. We had no word for it in Western language. The term comes from Henry Corbin, a Sufi scholar, who speaks of how the Sufis envisioned this imaginal realm. Entry into the realm requires a difficult transformation. It is necessary to overcome the will to power and desire for mastery. Paths are unique, individual, personal and ever changing. We are nomadic beings and being human is an ongoing project.

Imaginal love is different from duality. It is a coming together of mind and heart to live in oneness not only with all brothers and sisters but with all forms of life. It is a wider space of love encompassing all the planet. In this place, the heart is not the center of emotions, but mind is in the heart and they have become one with clear perception.

The Gospel calls us to work for justice and act for peace. As a community, we share ideas about how we can live more simply, how to reduce carbon emissions, how to protect our earth and other problems. As we work to bring peace to the world let us consider our own peace and continue to remember our hearts, our woundedness and the healing that needs to occur. Perhaps answers to particular earthly problems will come as we journey from less to more consciousness.



We arrive at birth as part of the divine spark. Life happens. In our earthly journey, many experiences affect our hearts and in turn the hearts of those we love. We know now that the effects of emotional trauma are passed down from one generation to another. We carry pain or prejudices of our ancestors. Don't our beloved ancestors benefit from the inner work that we do?

The pain of situations or relationships can cause us to shut down and build walls. We do so as a protection against further hurt but we really hurt ourselves in the process. We can become hardened, bitter, angry or judgmental. Hurt wants to hurt. Someone said, "I will remember and recover not forgive and forget." Looking honestly at our own vulnerability is humbling and painful. The gift of being vulnerable is a special grace. Dismantling the walls and barriers that separate us from each other and our very selves takes enormous courage, but an empty vessel holds more love, compassion and understanding. This is an ongoing process. Like we are layers of an onion, we peel and peel and peel again, until we recognize that the healing has taken place from the inside out and not from the outside in.

Daily meditation is important. Martin Laird, in *Into the Silent Land*, says we must be still and know who we are. Who am I really? "You are a ray

of God's own light" invites us to dig deeper and deeper to find that spark and gift of beauty. As Louis Savery writes in *The New Spiritual Exercises In the Spirit of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin*, "God's Christ Project encompasses the entire evolving universe and its aim is to bring

creation (with all of us) back to God, fully conscious of our divine origin and divine destiny." This project is very personal and interpersonal and invites all. It is the work of an immense community and the work of saints.

The Muslims have a traditional tale of an ant carrying water on his back when Nemrod started a fire in which to throw Abraham. The crow made fun of the ant asking what he was going to do with the water. The ant responded he wanted to put out the fire in which Nemrod would throw Abraham. The crow jeered saying that he could not put the fire out. The ant responded that he knew that to be true. One drop was not sufficient, but he would have demonstrated his willingness and concern.

Our world is divided and suffering. One committed ant with one drop of water is good but many ants carrying one drop can make a difference.

DRAWDOWN

For the top ten most cost-effective ways to drawdown carbon from the atmosphere, go to www.drawdown.org where you will find many additional ways, and a discussion of the pros and cons of each one.

Reviewing the film *Cowspiracy: The Sustainability Secret*

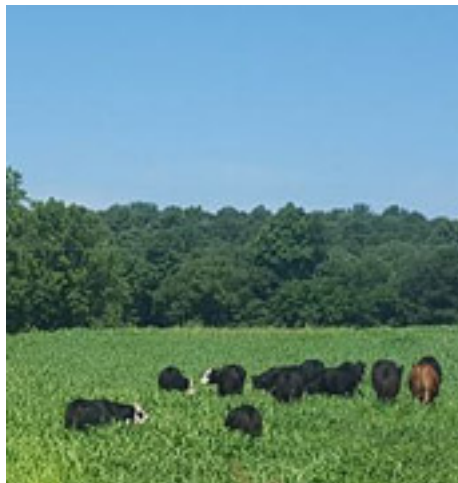
By Susan Classen, CoL

The documentary, *Cowspiracy: The Sustainability Secret*, follows filmmaker Kip Anderson as he passionately looks for root causes and solutions to the climate crisis. His search convinces him that there is one primary cause—animal agriculture, and one solution—become a vegan.

When faced with environmental organizations that see climate change more broadly, Kip begins to wonder about a conspiracy: “Are many environmental organizations trying to obscure the impact of animal agriculture upon climate change?” The fast-paced film weaves together statistics about animal agriculture with Kip’s growing certainty that environmental organizations are purposely turning a blind eye to the leading cause of climate change.

I found the documentary troubling. Can it be true that eating meat is worse for the planet than fossil fuel emissions? A quick Google search of “beef and methane” reveals widely divergent views regarding animal “Ag” and the resulting methane gas. I found articles entitled “Beef production is bad for the planet and causes climate change,” along with “Climate change mitigation through pasture management.” How do I find my way through the confusing array of arguments and counter arguments all based on statistics, studies and data?

I started by asking questions. Kip’s argument is based on one astounding statistic—51% of human-caused greenhouse gases come from animal agriculture. What was the source of the statistic? I learned that it came from the environmental organization, World Watch Institute, in a report that has been rejected by both the Union of Concerned Scientists and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Doug Boucher, a climate advisor for the Union of Concerned Scientists, explains that



the authors of the report arrived at 51% rather than the commonly accepted 15% of greenhouse gasses by counting, not just methane from animal manure, but also CO₂ released by livestock respiration. For more detail on why scientists reject that study, you can google “Doug Boucher Cowspiracy Movie Review.”

Fifteen percent of greenhouse gases from animal agriculture is still a lot. Is it true that all animal agriculture is bad for the planet even if it isn’t as bad as Cowspiracy claims? Garth Brown’s review put it this way: “The biggest mistake [the producers] made was in blaming the cow, rather than how we humans raise the cow.” It’s true that animals raised on factory farms contribute significantly to climate change. And it’s also true, as Carolyn Grindrod’s review emphasizes, that animals raised on well-managed pastures contribute to the solution because healthy pastures sequester carbon.

Perhaps my favorite line in Cowspiracy was spoken by a pasture-fed-beef producer in California. After Kip quotes a statistic regarding how many acres of rainforest in Brazil are destroyed because of beef production, the rancher looks at him and says, “If the environment in Brazil wasn’t designed to raise beef

then they shouldn’t be eating beef.” In other words, the local context determines if raising a particular food is destructive or not. Washington Post food blogger Tamar Haspel put it this way in her February 2015 blog on grass-fed beef: “When it comes to feeding people, there is never one right answer. It depends on the farm, the area, the animal, the crop, the weather, the market and a bazillion other things.”

In the Summer issue of LENN, Kate Armstrong wrote that being an evolutionary catalyst invites us to ask, “What attitudes, beliefs and values do we want to guide us through the coming Turn?” For me personally, perhaps the greatest benefit of watching Cowspiracy was the challenge it presented regarding the “attitudes, beliefs and values” that I want to guide me. While I respect the commitment and passion of the producers, I saw in them a tendency to over-simplify, generalize and reject those who have a different perspective. They mirrored how I don’t want to be as I live my own passion and commitment.

I want to welcome complexity as part of the beauty of an inter-connected universe. Doing that means accepting that there is neither one cause for an issue like climate change nor one solution. Welcoming complexity provides multiple entry points for expressing passion for our planet and concern for its future.

If you choose to watch Cowspiracy for yourself, I hope you watch it with a group committed to engaging Kate’s question. “What attitudes, beliefs and values do we want to guide us through the coming Turn?” May our longing for a healthy planet energize us as we seek to live our values through daily choices about what we eat.

Retrofitting for “Net Zero Energy”

By Evi Klett

I visited Andy Bardwell in late November just after sunset at his home near the intersection of Yale and Wolfe in Denver to learn about the intricacies of energy in his home. The outside autumn chill disappeared upon entering his pleasantly warm house. He gave me the low down on his solar thermal (hot water heating) system, his PV (photo voltaic) solar system for generating electricity, and other infrastructure and design elements that enable him to live in a “net zero energy” home.

Since installing his solar panels in 2009, he has basically only had to pay a \$23 monthly connection fee to Xcel for connecting to the energy grid. In the summer his electricity meter runs backwards! His PV solar panels pump electricity into Xcel’s grid. In the winter he needs some extra electricity (when the temperature drops below 40 degrees) but never more than he produces in the summer. This makes his home “net zero” over the course of a year.

He has large windows facing southward that gain passive solar heat (like a greenhouse) during the winter months given the sun’s lower trajectory across the sky. In summer the 4-foot eaves on the house prevent the high summer sun from shining in those same windows. He also has a super efficient swamp cooler made by Breezair that keeps his home cool during the summer months. In addition, he has insulated blinds that can keep the cool (or warm) air inside the house.

Andy also has 13 large (4’ x 8’) hot water solar panels (solar thermal) on his roof that are connected to a 1,000-gallon water tank in his basement. This is a closed loop

system in which the sun-heated hot water in the roof panels is pumped to the basement tank where the heat is “banked.” Think of what happens to water in a garden hose when it’s been sitting in the hot sun. That water can be so hot you don’t want to water any plants with it!



Andy Bardwell

Cold water from the city circulates through this same tank in a separate 100-foot coiled copper piping system. The cold water gets preheated by the 1,000 gallons of hot water before it enters a separate electric hot water heater. The concept here is like sitting in hot springs or a hot tub. The heat of the water in the tub heats your body deeply to the bone. Visit capitololarenergy.com for more information.

In winter, even the warm air that circulates through the house by his furnace is heated through this solar hot water system instead of by gas. The solar thermal system provides

the hot water that runs through the heat exchanger (like a radiator) in the furnace that heats the air.

A separate 6.3-kilowatt PV solar panel system is arrayed on Andy’s southern sloping rooftop on the front of the house adjacent to the street. This electricity generating system is tied to Xcel’s energy grid. When the sun is shining, Andy is contributing electricity to the energy grid. Sometimes that electricity is even charging his electric powered Nissan Leaf. If he plugs it in for recharging during a sunny day, he is basically powering his car via his PV panels directly. If he recharges it at night, he uses electricity from the grid which he has been contributing to during the daytime.

Installing such systems can get pretty expensive, and cost wasn’t the main driver for Andy. Limiting his use of fossil fuels was. He was able to take 30% of the solar system cost as a tax credit.

If you are interested in making your home more energy efficient and/or you are also considering obtaining solar panels, check with your local government or utility company for an audit, or join a local sustainability group where neighbors develop and share expertise. In Denver, you can set up an appointment with Denver Energy Challenge. They will meet with you in person or over the phone to go over details of your home energy use. They’ll talk with you about the most cost-effective ways to improve your home energy efficiency as well as discuss different ways you can potentially finance solar on your rooftop. Andy is also willing to share details about his solar energy systems. You can email him at andy@optimiserenergy.com.

Reducing Transportation Emissions

by Nick Venner

For my six-mile commute for school, I've been riding an electric bicycle that my Dad helped me repurpose from a regular bike. You buy a kit; it takes a fair amount of effort to install. Pedal-assist then kicks in the motor as you are pedaling, giving you a little assist. My Dad calls it "biking but faster" – or with less effort! It boosts my stamina and saves gas. We probably put in about \$1,500 per bike (including the cost of the mountain bike), but I do see some options available now for closer to \$750. Check out <https://cleantechnica.com/> for reviews of the latest. I expect that increased demand and tech improvements will drive the price down. You can get decent bike snow tires for about \$100, and they make it possible to ride on any road that a car can ride on. When I do get a ride with my parents, it's in one of our two plug-in cars. You can get a low-mileage used Leaf for \$10,000 or less, and it's all electric. The plug-in hybrid Volt costs more like \$18,000 used; for that one, the first 45 miles are all electric, then the gas kicks in. For both, there are no emissions when you temporarily stop the car, as there are when a fossil-fuel-powered vehicle idles. Fueling both cars is seamless – you just plug them in when you get home for the night.

One might worry that you might get a massive spike in the electricity bill. Our family increased our electricity use some when we started plugging in the two cars and the bike, but we did the math and found that, in fact, we are saving money. When you compare the three-cents-per-mile cost of our electric cars, with the cost of fueling with gasoline, the electric Leaf and the hybrid Volt are cutting our per-mile costs to a third. At 80 miles per kilowatt hour, the electric bike uses a twentieth of the electricity of the electric car, so I use the bike as much as possible for my personal



transportation. There are even a few times I've ridden it completely across our entire metropolitan area, from Lakewood to Aurora. If you can't afford an electric car, an electric bike is a great way to get around. We know an older friend who couldn't keep her license – an e-tricycle or recumbent bike are great alternatives! If you need transportation for longer distances, research the findings by those who practice hyper-mileage efficiency. For example, President Carter was right when he set the speed limit at 55 miles per hour to increase gasoline efficiency – and even electric vehicles are more efficient at slower speeds. This is due to the math related to the physics of air resistance, which is given by this formula: http://www.softschools.com/formulas/physics/air_resistance_formula/85/ What this essentially says is that, as your velocity increases, your air resistance increases exponentially, so driving just slightly more slowly really improves your fuel economy.

I really haven't had to consider riding the public transit because where I need to go is within the suburbs and it is even easier to bike, but I do know that the Regional Transportation

District provides some options even in my neighborhood. The bus goes down the street I need to travel to get to high school and also to the light rail station. When thinking about whether to add public transit as an option in your travels, I would review www.sharedmobilityprinciples.org.

I also did some math on airplane miles per gallon per seat, which turns out to be in the range of 50-100. (More modern planes like the Dreamliner can get up to 120.) This was part of the calculation we did in advance of a family vacation. Even using our old-fashioned motor home (at about ten miles per gallon), our family of four generated a lower carbon impact driving to Canada and coming back to Colorado by way of the Pacific coast, than if we had flown to Hawaii and back.

I recommend the following for calculating carbon impact of various transportation choices: <https://calculator.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx>

Nick Venner is a 16-year-old Colorado student and plaintiff in Our Children's Trust lawsuit, which he hopes will require the federal government to put an end to greenhouse gas emissions and repair the climate for future

Wasted!

The Story of Food

Film review

By Libby Comeaux, CoL

Did you know that forty percent of the food produced in the U.S. is not eaten? That costs us a trillion dollars a year. At the family level, \$1500 worth of food goes into the trash annually. When it ends up in the landfill, rather than as compost, it can take decades to decompose, producing methane that is 25 times as damaging as carbon dioxide. But when soberly repurposed, whether as delicacies such as bouillabaisse or prosciutto di Parma, our planet breathes a whole lot easier.

Wasted! The Story of Food Waste tells all. “Anna Chai’s and Nari Kye’s food-centric film inverts the usual eco-doc formula, spending only enough

time on problems to establish their importance, then traveling around the world to prove how satisfying the solutions can be,” says The Hollywood Reporter.

The most intriguing solution to me (among many) is the Japanese practice of feeding unique cocktails of otherwise-wasted food to free-range pigs. Depending on the input, the pork develops a unique flavor, and people then purchase their favorites. Contrast this practice to our Industrial Ag practice of feeding GMO corn and soy to pigs to fatten them for market. In Japan, the meat varieties are tasty and organic. In the U.S. we would be eating genetically modified food. Vegetarians will shudder, but there is something to be said for pigs eating waste. I remember that is what they ate on grandma’s farm. There is



something to be said, indeed, for all the many other creative ways of processing the food that we grow but do not eat in our country, which is overweight in so many ways. One of my favorite take-aways is to freeze my vegetable scraps (the ones I used to throw away), then when I’m making soup, throw them into the blender and then into the soup. Thick rich brew, surprising flavor. Yum!

For delicious ingenuity that alerts us to carbon efficiency in our own kitchens, I highly recommend tracking down this film and giving your taste buds a treat.

The EARTH is Weeping

“The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she ‘groans in travail’ (Rom. 8:22). We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth (cf. Gen. 2:7); our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters.”

Laudato Si paragraph 2



Christian Farminaries, seminaries grounded in the ways we grow and share our food – can become foundational to the way the gospel is understood. The Green Seminary Initiative, founded in part by support from the Forum on Religion and Ecology, is currently hosted by Green Faith and Drew Theological School in Madison, New Jersey near New York City.

“As religious and spiritual leaders, we are committing to make changes in our own lives, and to support the members of our communities in doing the same. Together, we come to you with an invitation to embark on a journey towards compassionate simplicity for the sake of the climate, the human family, and the community of life. For many of us, changes in three areas make the greatest impact: dramatically reducing emissions from our home energy use, adopting a plant-based diet and reducing food waste, and minimizing automobile and air travel.”

Interfaith Climate Statement
adopted COP 23