

February 8, 2023



Daily Reflections

JOURNEYING THROUGH CHALLENGING TIMES

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ARIZONA DREAMING – PART 2

By Julie Mussché

“We require a new and universal solidarity...All of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents.”

POPE FRANCIS

Laudato Sí, 14

Reflection

The recent drive to Arizona was to gather with friends for the annual Havasu Balloon Festival. While it is not unusual for the balloons to never ascend because of weather, the journey is always a delight. An almost five-hour drive,

I always marvel at how the landscape shifts as we navigate from the California coastal plain slicing through the Peninsular and San Bernardino ranges and dropping into the Coachella Valley, and Mojave and Colorado Desert regions. The geographically distinctive passage from one state to another widens one's understanding of the equilibrium a sense of place provides.

Having traveled the same route last year, I had wondered how visible the impact of drought would be on the landscape. Exiting the I-10 on Poston Road toward Parker, we traversed the Colorado River Indian Reservation where roughly fifty percent of the sparse population sits below the poverty line and crops such as alfalfa are grown for income. The alfalfa crops, in particular, seemed thinner and patchier, and several large trees had withered and died passing through the rural area. The evidence of drought was tangible and ironically, the Colorado River Indian Tribe, who hold extensive water rights, are leasing Colorado River Water to Arizona for drought relief. This seems on the face of it, to be a remarkably generous act and certainly shines a new light on the context of poverty.

There is a growing consensus in the scientific community that we are potentially moving toward a mass extinction event due to climate change. Would it not be a bit arrogant to consider humankind immune to such realities? The Colorado River example may offer a brief glimpse that we are all in this together, interrelated and need one another. Are we not called to an ecological conversion? "This conversion calls for a number of attitudes which together foster a spirit of generous care, full of tenderness. First, it entails gratitude and gratuitousness, a recognition that the world is God's loving gift, and that we are called quietly to imitate his generosity in self-sacrifice and good works..." (*Laudato Sí*, 220)



Photo by Julie Mussché

Considerations

- When have you experienced generous care from another?
 - How do you translate the meaning of being self-less in the quest for environmental conversion?
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Prayerful Affirmation

“God, who calls us to generous commitment and to give him our all, offers us the light and the strength needed to continue on our way. In the heart of this world, the Lord of life, who loves us so much, is always present. He does not abandon us, he does not leave us alone, for he has united himself definitively to our earth, and his love constantly impels us to find new ways forward. Praise be to him!”

POPE FRANCIS

Laudato Sí, 245

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