

September 23, 2024

Daily Reflections



Center for Spiritual Development

THE EARTH WEEPS

By Julie Mussché

A Quote

“All of creation is a song of praise to God.”

HILDEGARD OF BINGEN

Reflection

Dear Reader,

This reflection was originally published September 2022 and yet seems so timely with coastlines and islands being impacted more severely each year by rising seas. Let us pray and act with intention in our care for creation.

Have you ever viewed a glacier up close? They are incredibly beautiful. While I had seen glaciers from a distance as a child, during an excursion through the Alps 40+ years ago, I was able to view the Aletsch Glacier up close. I was amazed at the variety of colors that the ice crystals in a glacier reflect. From

azure, to turquoise, to robin's egg blue, it's quite remarkable. Given another chance to glimpse a glacier up close in 2004, I visited the Mendenhall Glacier while on a trip to Alaska. That was equally breathtaking to view. Then, 15 years later, while on a visit back to Alaska, I was shocked to see how far the Mendenhall had retreated.

Glacial melt is a global phenomenon. Perhaps the most significant example is Greenland. Flying over Greenland to and from Europe across four decades, the diminishing ice sheet is visible. "Glaciers are melting faster, losing 31 percent more snow and ice than they did 15 years earlier." (*The Associated Press*, April 28, 2021) Most of us are aware of the rising ocean waters and increasing coastal erosion as a result of glacial melt. Another significant aspect of snow and ice surface loss is that it will exponentially impact global warming. You see, snow and ice reflect radiating energy back into space. This is called the albedo effect. Simply put, without as much snow and ice, the planet will heat up more rapidly.

Another existential impact: glaciers and glacial melt provide fresh water for a significant portion of the planet. Many of the glacial-fed rivers that offer drinking water also serve as transportation routes for travel and commerce. The Aletsch Glacier mentioned previously could disappear by the end of the century. This mass of snow and ice feeds the Massa River, a confluence of the Rhone River.

As someone who loves our mother the earth and the gift of creation, I'm heartbroken and frightened by how dramatically the evidence of climate change is upon us. While we stand at a crossroads, all is not lost. As Pope Francis offers in *Laudato Si'*, "The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know things can change. The Creator does not abandon us, he never forsakes his loving plan. ... Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home." Now is the time; the call to ecological conversion is a clarion one. May God guide and bless us in this endeavor.



Sólheimajökull Glacier

By Alicia Rodriguez

For Pondering

- What gives you concern regarding climate change?
- How do you feel called by the Spirit to take action?
- Where is God for you in this moment of need?

For Prayer

A Prayer for Our Earth (Excerpted)

*O Lord, seize us with your power and light,
help us to protect all life,
to prepare for a better future,
for the coming of your Kingdom
of justice, peace, love and beauty.
Praise be to you!
Amen.*

POPE FRANCIS, LAUDATO SÍ

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