

Praise be Brother Sun, Sister Moon.

Be praised, my Lord through brothers Wind and Air.

Clouds, Storms and all weather.

And praise be our Sister Water, our Brother Fire and our Mother Earth.

Let us serve with great humility.

Sisters and brothers we are part of the earth. St Francis has got it right: the sun is our brother just as the moon is our sister.

Most profoundly, the Earth is Our Mother. For she sustains us with all that we need for life. We are to honor our mother.

This weekend thousands of Christians join together in focussing even if for just this one hour, on the beauty of the earth, on the mystery of the cosmos, on the reality of our impact on creation and all that lives therein.

Today, especially as we in Louisville have felt that warm embrace of our Brother Sun, we stand with thousands--perhaps millions of others--who would be convinced that our planet is in trouble. It is doubtful that a healthy planet could sustain 7 billion hungry and thirsty bodies--impossible for a planet that has been plundered and abused for centuries.

It is heart breaking to see our picturesque countryside being gobbled up by urban sprawl. The names of some of the subdivisions would be entertaining if they did not reflect such a sad reality: Oak Hills Estates, (no oaks left) Rolling Meadows (the meadows are long gone), Ever Green Glen (no ever greens left, the glen has been flattened).

I am sure that each of us has kept up with the many ways in which planet earth is being ravaged: massive oil spills, mountain top removal for coal; a million gallons of fresh water used daily in Las Vegas simply to wash towels, some of which had been used just once; millions of plastic water bottles corroding land and water; fast food wrappers and cups strewn along the railroad tracks on Frankfort Avenue. Not a rosy picture. But I believe there is hope. My grandma Mernagh, a good Anglican, used to say, “We live in hope or die in despair!” And we, dear community, are people of hope. People of change.

I believe that change is possible. We can make a difference. And like every area in life: change begins with us. Sirach, our Old Testament scripture reading today says: “. . . to act faithfully is a matter of your own choice. The Lord has put before you fire and water; stretch out your hand for whichever you choose. Before each person are life and death, and whichever we choose will be

given. Whichever we choose will be given. I suspect that none of us here would consciously choose death. To choose life is deeply engrained in us Christians. Life, new life, respect for all created life, is in our very bones, part of our spiritual DNA. We have the freedom to choose.

So today, we have the freedom to choose again. Today we have the opportunity to think about the choices that we make on a daily basis. Today we are reminded that our choices make a difference not just to us and our household but to the world.

Like a stone dropped into the water, everything that we do ripples out to the rest of the world and has an effect, somewhere and at sometime. I recently had a conversation with a friend who applauded the transfer of industry from North America to China. “We don’t want it here, she said, polluting our air!”

There is no such thing as my water, my air or my earth: these elements are common property; they belong to all that lives, including the smallest of critters. Everything that we do matters.

My dear soul friends, we are challenged by a reading of the signs of the times, to an attitude adjustment. And what a better example of an attitude towards which we could aspire than that of Saint Francis of Assisi who had such great respect for creation that he was able to see and therefore to reverence God in the created universe. Simple, beautiful, deep respect for creation.

Let us, from this day forward, make choices that are life giving and not death dealing not just for our own good but for the good of the entire created order. The earth and the generations that follow will thank us.