



3 May 2009
Fourth Sunday of Easter

Dear Parishioners,

In a journal entry Thomas Merton wrote:

***Real spring weather—these are the precise days when everything changes.
All the trees are fast beginning to be in leaf, and the first green freshness
of a new summer is all over the hills.***

I like this passage because there is something about the ‘green’ of trees every spring that appeals to me. There is “freshness” to it. It speaks of nature’s resilience, and of our own resilience, too.

Yet, this resilience within ourselves as well as in nature can be stunted, even deadened by the way we live and by the choices we make. This was brought to my attention as I read an article called “Stewards of Creation” by William Skylstad in the national Catholic weekly “America”. In it, he writes about an elder from an Inuit village in Alaska who spoke at the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change. This elder told the participants how his village now regularly floods in the fall because the sea ice is forming later and later allowing storm-swells up the nearby river. Because of it, the village has had to re-locate to higher ground.

Whenever I read about such dire situations due to global warming, I find myself flooded by a sense of helplessness. Yet, what I have learned is that in our own small, everyday ways, together we can make a difference when we take responsibility, and see ourselves as stewards of this God-given earth instead of owners/consumers which only feeds a sense of entitlement in us.

Father Martinus Cawley, a monk of my monastic community in Oregon has long been involved in the question on the environment. He would talk to us about the “theology of ecology” and said that, while legally we might own the monastic land and view it as “ours”, we really own nothing for it all belongs to God. We are stewards of this land, nothing more.

May all of us recognize our responsibility toward this earth and foster a greater respect for the environment as well as a sacramental approach to life, that the “first, green freshness” of this time of year might continue to offer resilience and hope in the years ahead. God needs our cooperation.

Father Tim Clark