

“What we witness” reflection process

The [Faith Economy Ecology Working Group](#) has been developing reflection processes to help prayer and reflection groups wrestle with the tremendous amount of behavior and thought change that is necessary to begin moving toward more sustainable communities of sufficiency. The following reflection exercise developed by the working group looks specifically at the starting point of what we witness. We invite you to share this reflection process in your own community and to send us your thoughts.

Opening prayer (together):

By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion. On the willows there we hung up our lyres. For there our captors required of us songs, and our tormentors, mirth, saying, “Sing us one of the songs of Zion!” How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a foreign land? *Psalms 137:1-4*

Leader: At times we feel that we are so far away from home, the home that God created and intended for us to share. We find ourselves in a world where the destructive power of a growth-driven economic model ignores Earth’s limits and its need to rest and regenerate. In our most sacred moments of prayer and connection with our community of faith, we remember that we are all one human family living in a world where all life-forms interconnect. The preamble of the Earth Charter highlights this knowledge:

[W]e must decide to live with a sense of universal responsibility, identifying ourselves with the whole Earth community as well as our local communities. We are at once citizens of different nations and of one world in which the local and global are linked. Everyone shares responsibility for the present and future well-being of the human family and the larger living world. The spirit of human solidarity and kinship with all life is strengthened when we live with reverence for the mystery of being, gratitude for the gift of life, and humility regarding the human place in nature.

Go around the circle having each person read one of the points below:

- The valuing of money and material goods more than humans and ecosystems.
- The inherent violence of an economy that grows along with the wealth of a few individuals and corporations while the natural world and human well being – the clearest signs of God’s bounty – suffer and deteriorate.
- The use of international financial institutions, corporate lobbying and marketing, think tanks, major media and military force to secure the wealth and power of a small part of society while a great many others, especially women and people of color are often excluded.
- “Free trade” and economic globalization that increase ecological depletion and leave masses of people vulnerable through deeper poverty and insufficient access to food, water, education and health care.
- The loss of people, cultures, species and traditional knowledge forced aside as our lives are dominated by a world view that seeks economic growth regardless of the consequences;
- Soul-deadening over-consumption, consumerism, and the insatiable desire for “more” that paralyzes and enslaves far too many people in wealthier societies.

Moment of silence

Sharing: Share experiences of feeling disconnected from the natural world.

How are those experiences related to our economic system?

- Name the winners and losers in the current global economy (both human and natural community).
- What does community mean to you? What have you done to help members of your community to be more connected with nature?
- How does being part of a community help you to connect with others and with the natural world?
- In what ways are you resisting the demand to “sing the songs” in the current global economic system? In what ways does your faith life help? In what ways does your connection to community help?

Closing prayer (together): We stand firm in our commitment to a new way of life and a different economy, based on the integrity and dignity of all creation, the common good, ecological health and resilience, sufficiency, equality, solidarity, caring for the most vulnerable and impoverished, and decision-making at the most local level possible.

We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us.
When we see land as a community to which we belong,
we may begin to use it with love and respect.
Aldo Leopold, conservationist, ecologist and nature writer

Share your thoughts:

Please take time to summarize your reflections (during or after the meeting). We would appreciate it if you would share a one-page summary with us. Include a brief summary of the key findings; other experiences (e.g. stories related to the themes of faith, ecology and the global economy) that the group discussed; who participated in the discussion (e.g. prayer group, local parish group, etc.) Also include any evaluative comments participants had about this process.

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