**PILGRIMS OF HOPE: REFLECTION FOR THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT**

**APPEALS FOR HOPE**

**OPENING PRAYER**

Loving and Gracious God, help us understand that we have the power and the duty to act against the injustices that bind people in poverty and debt. Grant us the courage to challenge the structures that perpetuate these conditions, and the strength to work tirelessly for a world where every person can achieve their full potential. Inspire our hearts with your compassion and justice. Empower us to be bearers of hope and agents of change. Together, may we help bring forth solutions rooted in fairness and equity; economic systems that uplift and create hope for the downtrodden; and a future where every nation can walk the path of sustainable development, free from the shackles of debt. May we be instruments of Your peace, secure in the faith that, through our collective effort, poverty can be overcome. Amen*. (Fr. Charles Chilufya, SJ, Zambia, Development & Peace)*

**READINGS FOR REFLECTION**

**Genesis 1: 1 - 2:3**

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while the spirit of God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light “Day,” and the darkness God called “Night.” And there was evening and there was morning, the first day. And God said, “Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” So, God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome “Sky.” And there was evening and there was morning, the second day. And God said, “Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. God called the dry land “Earth,” and the waters that were gathered together God called “Seas.” And God saw that it was good. Then God said, “Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.” And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day. 14 And God said, “Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. God made the two great lights— the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night— and the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day. And God said, “Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.” So, God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day. And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.” And it was so. God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.” So God created humankind in the divine image, in the image of God humankind was created; male and female God created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” God said, “See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. God saw everything that God had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. Thus, the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that God had done and rested on the seventh day from all the work that God had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it, God rested from all the work that God had done in creation.

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

* What is the overall mood of the creation story in Genesis?
* Can you think of situations in our world today which seem to be in direct disconnect with the creation story?

**LEARN MORE ABOUT SHARING THE FRUITS OF THE EARTH**

* **Appeals for Hope: The Fruits of the Earth are for Everyone:**
  + The Jubilee reminds us that the goods of the earth are not destined for a privileged few, but for everyone. The rich must be generous and not avert their eyes from the faces of their brothers and sisters in need. (Spes Non Confundit, 16)
  + I renew my appeal that “with the money spent on weapons and other military expenditures, let us establish a global fund that can finally put an end to hunger and favour development in the most impoverished countries, so that their citizens will not resort to violent or illusory situations, or have to leave their countries in order to seek a more dignified life.” (Spes Non Confundit, 16)

**LEARN MORE REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

* How can we ensure that the gifts of God’s creation, which are intended for all of humanity, are shared equitably?
* Whom can you appeal to in your city, province or country to ensure this equity?

**LEARN MORE ABOUT FORGIVENESS OF DEBT**

* **Appeals for Hope: Appeals for Forgiveness of Debt:**
  + Another heartfelt appeal that I would make in light of the coming Jubilee is directed to the more affluent nations. I ask that they acknowledge the gravity of so many of their past decisions and determine to forgive the debts of countries that will never be able to repay them. More than a question of generosity, this is a matter of justice (Spes Non Confundit, 16)
  + If we really wish to prepare a path to peace in our world, let us commit ourselves to remedying the remote causes of injustice, settling unjust and unpayable debts, and feeding the hungry. (Spes Non Confundit, 16)

**LEARN MORE REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

* What sense is there in holding impoverished countries indebted to wealthy countries accountable for paying the debt they will never be able to repay?
* How might addressing these injustices lead to a more peaceful world?

**LEARN MORE ABOUT LIVING OUR BAPTISMAL CALL TO EVANGELIZE**

* **Appeals for Hope: Living Our Baptismal Call to Evangelize:**
  + The Jubilee can serve as an important occasion for giving concrete expression to this form of synodality, which the Christian community today considers increasingly necessary for responding to the urgent need for evangelization. All the baptized, with their respective charms and ministries, are co-responsible for ensuring that manifold signs of hope bear witness to God’s presence in the world. (Spes Non Confundit, 17)

**LEARN MORE REFLECTION QUESTION**

* As we celebrate the 1700th anniversary of the celebration of the first great Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, how can we work together to proclaim the Kerygma, that is, “Jesus Christ loves you; he gave his life to save you; and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you”? (Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium)

**CALL TO ACTION**

Choose one of the “Appeals to Hope” above and suggest concrete ways to begin making positive changes at the local level through to the global level.

**DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE 2025 CAMPAIGN**

**“TURN DEBT TO HOPE”**

To continue to learn more about this theme, please use the Development & Peace resources which you will find on the windsorheritageparishes.ca web site under **NEW THIS WEEK**