



Creation Care Reflection: Week Three

March 2020, the month our world changed forever. The arrival of Covid 19 brought with it a level of disruption, the likes of which we have not known. Everything seemed to just suddenly stop. As a sports fan, when the NBA cancelled their season and the NCAA cancelled March Madness, that's when I really knew something was amiss. Two weeks this season was supposed to last a mere two weeks, and yet almost three years later Covid is still with us.

Yet in those early days, as we began to work, teach, and learn from home, something remarkable began to take place. It seemed that as life stood still for us, the Earth began to catch its breath. One of the early examples of this, as we entered in the first few months of the pandemic, revolved around the clearing of smog from a city in Asia that normally smogged in: a remarkable clearing of the air! With people working from home and with no one on the streets, the air had a chance to clear, providing a stunning view of a mountain that normally can't be seen due to the smog. Creation, it seems, was getting an opportunity to take a breath.

Across the world, this phenomenon seemed to continue, with air becoming cleaner and water becoming purer. I was able to bear personal witness to this when I traveled to Hawaii in May. One of the beaches I was fortunate of to spend time at, over the years had become a little beaten down and damaged because of the influx of tourists; specifically, the coral reef that is only 100 feet from shore. When Covid arrived, and visitors were unable to visit, a remarkable thing happened. The beach, and the reef, given the opportunity for respite and sabbath, began to recover and to recover quite well. In speaking with the locals, I'm also told that because of the respite and the recovery of the reef, the tropical fish numbers began to rise and return to their previous levels.

We know of the importance and respite and Sabbath that we all need to take. That has become even more clear over the past couple of years. Well, the planet needs such a respite and sabbath as well. On Day 11 of our Creation Care Challenge, we hear in the book of Leviticus that “

Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in their yield, but in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of complete rest for the land, a sabbath for the Lord.”
Leviticus 25: 3-4

Covid has shown us a glimpse of the benefit of sabbath for our world. We have had the opportunity to see first-hand the effect that rest and respite have on creation. Now as life resumes a familiar routine, the question before us is: How do we now provide the rest and respite creation needs? How do we care for what God has entrusted to us? These are questions certainly worthy of our prayers and worthy of our actions!

Peace,

Rev. Dan Purtell