

Categorized Notes from Conversation June 12, 2016

Education

- Stream sweepers are a young adult group that works to assess and clean rivers. They are working on the Hughes River now. He trains and manages the streamsweepers.
- Children in nature program at CCLC. Goal is to develop respect for earth and each other. Practice mindfulness and self control.
- Adults need to set example for children.
- Get kids closer to nature. They must get in there to understand and appreciate the natural world. This is fundamental and prerequisite to all other actions and policies.
- Every High School graduate must do community service hours.
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Pope Francis and Laudato Si

- An author in our group is writing a commentary on Laudato Si.
- In Laudato Si, Pope Francis used many abstract words, like technology, nations, etc. Individuals must translate those abstractions into concrete terms for themselves. Until you know what you individually stand for, you are just “listening”.
- Historical approach to understanding means the interpretation of events depends on the period when you arrive. Contrast Pope Francis with Pope Leo. This Pope believes in social justice and the recognizing we are part of the environment that is why UU's love him.
- Pope Francis is going deeper than the physical into improving culture for future generations helping us to come to know the God of design to further our vision of a better world.
- Love of God is not unreasonable. It's about unity and how we put the puzzle together.
- Pope says we cannot have piecemeal solutions. But Each person needs to do even a small piece of the piecemeal.
- Pope Francis starts with a given assumption that we are compassionate. Basic doctrine of faith. This is difficult to deal with when conversing with nonbelievers.
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What to leave future generations

- We need to hand off to future generation, people who are sensitive and empathic to life on this planet.
- We need to foster a positive spirit. Search for peacemakers.
- Leave our grandchildren on earth with less fear. Fear of others.
- We need to leave the world a better place than we found it.

- Leave diversity of creatures and people. Person worries the earth is becoming less diverse, more homogeneous. English has become the lingua franca of the world. Leads to loss of cultural richness.
- Get family into heaven.
- I am here to glorify God and praise him forever, to love others and to teach that to those around me, to disciple so that my children can see that I take responsibility.
- I would like to see a more empathetic world.
- Also, I'm hoping children can become kinder and more empathetic.
- The purpose of my life has been to procreate – I have three kids. I want to help make the world a better place.
- In my job I'm always thinking about what is the point of life. I have an increasing desire to change attitudes and to leave the world a better place. I want to work on the human dimension – we are all equal.
- I have been too busy in my life to worry about why we are here – but I know it is not to destroy the world.
- I think we have to change our own minds before we change other people. We have to take care of the poor and of the planet.
- I am particularly interested in improving race relations.
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About the Conversation

- Our group was composed of twelve individuals, most of whom were in their 60's and older and retired. Among us were two nurses, two reporters, an economist, a CPA, a Catholic priest, the chairman of the Rappahannock School Board.
- Meeting other like-minded people
- Looking for what God's plan is for him
- We could Reconvene in six months to see where we are.
- Mother nature, mother earth – I'm struck by the mother image. It's getting more difficult to care for the earth. I would like to see better communication.
- I am here to try to learn – I need to educate myself and others about climate change.
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- Disagrees with the notion stated by some, that the Conversation is "only preaching to the choir." This is a diverse group bringing many perspectives and talents to the table.
- We need to refuse to hate.
- We need not agree with everyone, but we need to deal intelligently with conflict and differences.
- We need to address people's fears of each other – address different beliefs.
- Open discussion of ideas dispels ambiguity.
- Taking a spiritual approach to the problems of the earth is attractive.
- Fear is the enemy.
- Fix recycling errors constructively without confronting those who make them directly.

- Keep up my enthusiasm for the ideas in the Encyclical. Start a Green Team at St. Peter's Catholic Church.
- See what others have to say about these environmental concerns.
- Improving the food system
- Working on climate change issue
- Concern about global warming
- Promote alternative energy – has been involved with it since 1978.
- Concern about climate change – the major threat to the earth -

Public policy and politics

- Who will run for public office? We need people who care about the environment.
- This place is also “a little piece of heaven”. To help keep it that way, energy efficiency needs State support.
- Open ended approach to planning.
- Ways to respond to issues, sustainable policies.
- California has grown its economy while reducing emissions.
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Our responsibilities

- The members of our group are probably privileged. Our basic needs have been met. What then is our responsibility to the others on the planet who are not so privileged?
- Epigenetics. Our own DNA is influenced by the environment. By our attitudes and thoughts we can change our DNA.
- The purpose of life is to love.
- We are here to be aware.
- Goal should be to live out of the conscious mind, which has powerful effects.
- Learn to respect all life – plants, animals, people.
- Many people want the American way of life. We are people of wealth and power. We must set an example for others.
- Some tangible ways: reduce meat consumption. Reduce driving. Use heating and cooling judiciously. Write legislators. Compost, even in suburbia.
- On my tombstone I want it to say: “She tried”
- Feed people, sustain life.
- Help seniors
- Participation –action, that is-- is what matters.
- Volunteering for people in need and doing and making do with far less ourselves.
- It's all about “Love.” We need to try longer for better answers.
- We come together to leave the blessings we have forward in time.
- Every High School graduate must do community service hours.

- From the Bible-- “love one another as I have loved you.”
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What does the earth need from us?

- The earth does not need us. We need the earth.
- It is daunting to realize how we have destroyed the environment.
- What can humans do to help the planet?
- Human form is highest level of biological awareness on earth.
- Humans have greatest diversity of proteins of all living organisms.
- Living close to Nature.
- You must fear some things. Ticks for example.
- People want to ignore climate change. It’s important to love the earth, don’t waste water, don’t pollute, etc. because you LOVE the earth.
- I’m trying to protect my land – I put a conservation easement on it – Hickerson Mountain. It is for sale.
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Connecting with the poor

- Person Volunteers at food pantry and free clinic. These are good ways to engage with less fortunate people, make connections, value others.
- Most important is to make connections with each other. This leads to valuing each other and all living things.
- Food pantry is good place to learn about all the people who live in rapp. County.
- Identify and help low income seniors.
- We are not alone--concern for the environment and humanity must come together.
- Feed the needy.
- Some people think that the poor will trash the housing if you build it for them.
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About Rappahannock County

- One in four people in Rappahannock County is over 65 and at least 300 of these are low income people. Offer services (transportation, call them, visit them at home). Although finding them is a challenge.
- but very impressed with people in Rappahannock County.
- Think of goals that we can accomplish.
- Meet goals—every High School graduate must perform community service such as working at recycling center.
- A problem I see is one John McCarthy talked about – we are educating other communities citizens. (Younger county residents must go elsewhere for jobs and housing.) Ours is an

aging community. In ten years we may not be able to staff volunteer fire and rescue squads.

- Some of us know more about other parts of the world than we do about rapp. County.
- Hopeful events – local food support.
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Connecting with people far away from us

- Some of us know more about other parts of the world than we do about rapp. County.
- It is hard for us to imagine that florida will go under water. Much less can we visualize Bangladesh under water.
- Suspicion plus fear equals anger.
- Transparency and communication will help.
- Without this connection, all of our politics and theories are for naught.
- Fear is found in subconscious mind.
- We are not fully embracing the awareness that we were given at birth.
- Are we cynical in the U.S.? is materialism overwhelming all other values?
- There is hope that we can move in a positive direction.
- Past generations did not know about the impact of their actions on the environment.
- Heat wave in india unless you see the people in india as fellow humans you cannot really care.
- Population growth is making an extraordinary demand on the planet.
- A former Peace Corps volunteer saw first hand how land had been deforested. He saw that people needed to meet their basic needs and how they went into survival mode.
- Chili has total solar power – there people don't have to pay for electricity. It can be done.
- There is an American University of Nigeria – because a Nigerian politician was educated by the Peace Corps. Ten million Nigerian children aren't schooled – mostly girls. But girls become farmers – they need education.
- I can only do what I can do myself – I can't change what goes on in India, for example. My granddaughter told me I don't "own" a tree – gave me something to think about.
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I want to make the world better and better for our children. These issues are big and urgent – we have to work on a big scale.

Free for All Comments:

In Brazil they are planting trees to reduce carbon.

I find it hard to put the poor and climate together. The Pope says we have to address human degradation – it is integral and connected to the environment.

The poor will be hurt first with environmental degradation.

But we're a capitalist society. We feel we should always be able to acquire more. And we will put people out of work but not buying stuff.

Capitalism can raise people out of poverty – but not unfettered capitalism. Capitalism can offer incentives or disincentives, like a carbon tax.

Don't account for other costs – externalities. (I don't know what he meant.)

Solar power can replace oil and coal – we can do this with incentives.

Natural gas is replacing coal.

There is no anti climate change lobby.

We need positive publicity. Regarding climate change, the more people know, the more they want to bury their heads in the sand.

We need a major movie about climate change.

Look at Sunnyside Farm – they use solar energy. They promote sustainable farming and living.

Solar panels are now less expensive. Wind power is growing.

Let's keep communicating with each other on these issues – let's keep it going.

There are opportunities – integrate solar power into the schools, educate kids. The high school has project based learning that could get into these issues.

But climate change is so political – you have to start small.

But there is common ground. Everyone thinks that we shouldn't exclude people and we shouldn't trash the world. We can find ways to continue the conversation.

What about affordable housing in Rappahannock?

My first impression of Rappahannock – which continues to this day – is that it is a privately maintained park.

