



THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA
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I spent the first part of this week as an ecumenical guest at the annual gathering of the Canadian Council of Catholic Bishops. There are some things about their meetings that are very different from ours in the United Church, (no lineups at the women's washroom is one of them), but as with any Christian group, the things we hold in common are greater than the differences.



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A presentation about Pope Francis' encyclical letter, [On Care for our Common Home](#), conveyed powerfully the responsibility for God's creation that we share with all Christians, and all people of the world. I recognized many of the themes that we seek to lift up in our church too: responsibility for caring for the environment; the need to act to counter the effects of climate change; the interconnectedness of all living things, and the call to practice a spirituality that rejects an obsession with consumption.

A statement that the environment and poverty are connected, brought to mind

for me the media coverage about water pollution in Brazil around the time of the Olympics. Most of us as Canadians likely heard those stories with revulsion, maybe with a touch of scorn, about the environment being degraded in this way. But I realized that without the Olympics, I might never have known of the environmental issues in Brazil, or had cause to think about the social and economic conditions that made them so hard to overcome.

In Canada we experience the effects of climate change in weird weather patterns, impacts on bird and animal populations, receding Arctic ice, and many other ways — but compared to much of the world, we are still at a stage when most people are able to carry on daily life as “normal.” The risk with this is that we can be tempted to not really pay attention to what is going on.

In this last week of the Season of Creation, let’s ponder the Pope’s reminder that, “we are not disconnected from the rest of creatures, but joined in a splendid universal communion.”

Blessings,

Nora

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