

From Pontiff to Pew (cont.)

they tell us to ‘till and keep’ the garden of the world [cf. Gen 2:15]. ‘Tilling’ refers to cultivating, ploughing or working, while ‘keeping’ means caring, protecting, overseeing and preserving. This implies a relationship of mutual responsibility between human beings and nature” (ibid., 67).

Environmental justice – implicitly proclaimed by the prophets – can no longer be regarded as an abstract concept or a distant goal. It is an urgent need that involves much more than simply protecting the environment. For it is a matter of justice – social, economic and human. For believers it is also a duty born of faith, since the universe reflects the face of Jesus Christ, in whom all things were created and redeemed. In a world where the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters are the first to suffer the devastating effects of climate change, deforestation and pollution, care for creation becomes an expression of our faith and humanity.

Now is the time to follow words with deeds. “Living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience” (Laudato Si’, 217). By working with love and perseverance, we can sow many seeds of justice and thus contribute to the growth of peace and the renewal of hope. It may well take years for this plant to bear its first fruits, years that, for their part, involve an entire ecosystem made up of continuity, fidelity, cooperation and love, especially if that love mirrors the Lord’s own self-sacrificing Love.

Among the Church’s initiatives that are like seeds sown in this field, I would mention the Borgo Laudato Si’ project that Pope Francis bequeathed to us at Castel Gandolfo. It is a seed that promises to bear fruits of justice and peace, and an educational project in integral ecology that can serve as an example of how people can live, work and build community by applying the principles of the Encyclical Laudato Si’.

I pray that Almighty God will send us in abundance his “Spirit from on high” (Is 32:15), so that these seeds, and others like them, may bring forth an abundant harvest of peace and hope. The Encyclical Laudato Si’ has now guided the Catholic Church and many people of good will for ten years. May it continue to

inspire us and may integral ecology be increasingly accepted as the right path to follow. In this way, seeds of hope will multiply, to be “tilled and kept” by the grace of our great and unfailing Hope, who is the risen Christ. In his name, I offer all of you my blessing.

From the Vatican, 30 June 2025

Memorial of the First Martyrs of Holy Roman Church

From the Pastor's Desk

This week's piece is necessarily brief given the holiday weekend and the need for the bulletin to be completed by Thursday afternoon. I am asking for prayers this coming week since I am scheduled to have surgery on Monday, July 7th for a significant umbilical hernia that resulted indirectly from my liver transplant (it's a long and arduous tale). In any case, I am glad that it is being addressed now that we are nearing the 1-year anniversary of my liver transplant, which, with all of its ups and downs, has been quite successful. Yes, there have been MANY side effects of medications that I have had to deal with (some of which will remain with me for the rest of my life); however, God has granted me a new opportunity at life for which I will be eternally grateful! Take it from me, God's goodness must never be underestimated, even during what may be perceived to be the worst of times!!

You will note that there are no Masses scheduled during the coming week. Although hernia repairs are usually an outpatient procedure, I will be kept in the hospital for a day or two because I am a transplant patient and also due to some other complications that I am dealing with at present. Also, the surgeon told me that it will take at least two weeks to recover to resume normal activity. Ergo, I am not celebrating weekday Masses, and it is MOST LIKELY that I will be asking someone to substitute for me for Masses next weekend. Know that I will be celebrating private Masses as I am able, and I will remember all of you then. Hopefully, I will come about full circle over the next couple of weeks and return to full ministry with one less obstacle in my way. I trust that God will be good to me. As I mentioned above, I have always placed my hope in Him, and my hopes have been greatly realized especially during this great Jubilee Year of Hope, 2025.