



**At A Distance - Wednesday April 22, 2020**

### **Stewardship, Sustainability and The Honorable Harvest**

Greetings Saints and we are most grateful to be with you again on another Wonderful Wednesday. Today is “Earth Day” and every year on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, we mark the anniversary of the modern environmental movement in 1970. This year is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first Earth Day Celebration, and I must say that I remember those early years of the Environmental “movement” fondly.

Those early years were indeed difficult. In the decades leading up to the first Earth Day, Americans were consuming vast amounts of leaded gas through massive and inefficient automobiles. Industry belched out smoke and sludge with little fear of the consequences from either the law or bad press. Air pollution was commonly accepted as the smell of prosperity. Until this point, mainstream America remained largely oblivious to environmental concerns and how a polluted environment threatens human health. Then we had some very strong reality checks. Love Canal where buried dioxin contaminated water, plants and people. The Cuyahoga River in Cleveland actually catches fire due to oil pollution. The near meltdown of Three Mile Island nuclear power station in Pennsylvania made us collectively gasp, and rethink how we generate electricity. Rachel Carson’s classic book “Silent Spring” brings into focus the legacy of DDT and its effects on our Winged Ones. And so, our dominant culture said, “Enough,” and we humans began to view our relationship with the natural world in a different way. A more “circular” way, more steward-like... where humans do not “dominate” the natural world as the Genesis creation story says. Rejecting the view that the natural world seemed to be there “for our exclusive use” as humans.

This was a time when we began to realize something that First Nations culture had known, spoke about and prayed and sang about for

generations. We are all here together, in collaboration not competition. Our Earth Mother providing all we need yet requiring that we respect the gifts of Air, Water, Plants and Animals.

And so out of deep respect for our Earth Mother, on this the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Her Day of Remembrance, I thought is appropriate to re-visit a strong First Nations' Learning. It is the "Rules for an Honorable Harvest... reminding us that we are in relationship with the Natural World and certain rules need to apply if we are to nurture and sustain that loving relationship.

And so as you read this for the first time or re-read it for the hundredth time... breathe deeply. Read and Breathe in gratitude for blessed Air, and Water, and Plants and Animals. For our collaboration and the commitment to renew our world, not just for tomorrow but for our Children in the 7<sup>th</sup> Generation.

Blessings and Happy Earth Day

Father Joe



## Rules for the Honorable Harvest

The Honorable Harvest is a covenant of reciprocity between humans and the land...

Introduce yourself. Be accountable as the one who come asking for life.

Ask permission before taking. Abide by the answer.

Never take the first. Never take the last.

Harvest in a way that minimizes harm.

Take only what you need, never more than half.

Leave some for others.

Respectfully use everything you take.

Take only that which is given to you.

Share, as Mother Earth has shared with you.

Be grateful

Give a gift in reciprocity for what you have taken.

Sustain the Ones who sustain you, and the earth will last forever.