

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” Genesis 1:1 NIV

Back in the winter of 2010, when I first got a phone call asking if I would be interested in taking a call in New Jersey, the images that came to my mind were not all positive. As others have said “New Jersey gets a bad rap “from people in other parts of the country. So when we first came here we were pleasantly surprised by the warmth and friendliness of the people, and really impressed by the beauty of this area known as part of the Lehigh Valley. When I walk out of our condo, just to see the hills in the background is always impressive. When I look out the kitchen window of our church, beyond the shopping plaza, the beauty of the hills and valley are always a beautiful site to look at. It got me to think about how beautiful God’s creation can be. The variety of colors, flowers, fields, mountains, rivers, lakes, streams and oceans are amazing as they can be intricate in design and fashion. Sometimes all of this becomes so common that we either forget where it comes from, or how complex nature really is when we see the final product.

A number of years ago, when my daughter was three, we helped lead a youth retreat in New Hampshire. Our daughter came with us, and at one point we took a trip to a local mountain where we could hike to the top. My daughter, being so little, asked if I could carry her, so climbed on my back and we went up. We kept going and going, and after a while, I was getting tired and at one point I wanted to turn back. My daughter however had other ideas, “Just a little farther daddy”. Well, we made it to the top, and to her credit my daughter walked a bit too.

I was glad I listened to my daughter. At the top of the mountain you could see the beautiful scenery of three states. I stood in awe of the beauty of God’s creation. I took time to thank God, and remembered the words of the psalmist “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof”.

We are in the midst of the summer season. Many of our activities are outdoors. Too often we go to the beach, or to picnic in the park, or just take a leisurely drive down a back road and never pause to appreciate what we are seeing or experiencing. More importantly we fail to consider that there must be or is a greater intelligence or being behind it all. An old hymn really says it best:

*This is my Father's world,
And to my listening ears
All nature sings, and round me rings
The music of the spheres.
This is my Father's world:
I rest me in the thought
Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas;
His hand the wonders wrought.*

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” These are first words of the Bible. May we always remember the creator when we partake of God’s creation!

Pr. John Van Haneghan