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SEPTEMBER 1 was proclaimed the “Day of Thanksgiving for Creation” by Pope Francis last year to introduce the Season of Creation from Sept. 1 to Oct. 4, the latter date being the feast of St. Francis of Assisi who was named “Patron of the Environment” by St. John Paul II in 1978.

Today we are more aware of the state of the environment in our country. On the other hand, the June 2015 encyclical “Laudato Si” gave us an orientation on preserving Mother Earth, our only home. And projects to develop alternative sources of power and energy, groups of different religious and/or political persuasions taking the lead in environment advocacy, the Duterte administration taking environment-related issues (mining, reforestation, reclamation projects, ancestral lands, etc.) among its main concerns are regularly given publicity to affirm there is something we can do as individuals and communities.

Recent articles like “How PH helps curb global warming” by Carlo A. Arcilla (Opinion, 6/12/16), “Boom in renewable drives energy remix,” “RE developers left out shrivelling in the sun” and “New growth areas for renewable energy” by Rita T. Olchondra (Business, 6/30/16), “How to live Pope Francis’ ‘Laudato Si’” by Bishop Gerardo A. Alminaza (Opinion, 6/23/16), and “Small steps result in big impact” by Charles E. Buban (Science and Health, 7/16/16), among others, raise our level of awareness. Studies are necessary, and concrete proofs should be made available for us to change our mindset and to purge ourselves of prejudices and superstitions, etc.

Though there were mixed reactions to President Duterte’s decision not to honor the agreement on carbon control at the International Convention on Climate Change in Paris last year, his insight should be considered objectively. Indeed, it is often the “less industrially developed” countries that are prevailed upon to observe the restrictions of such conventions, when it is the more developed ones that are mostly responsible for the deterioration of the environment, in the process restricting even more the development and progress of countries like ours.

We should be accepted with the rest of the world on an equal footing, on a level playing field, because there is already much being done to support the movement in our country (“Synergy needed to fight climate change threats,” Opinion, 6/20/16).

While studies are ongoing, understanding and appreciating the issues raised by Pope Francis about responsibilities, education, social and economic dimensions of ecology and others still have far to go.

The decision of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague on the West Philippine Sea supports our marine biodiversity and challenges us to develop our natural resources to benefit particularly the economically poor and indigenous peoples.

These are reasons for thanking God for Creation; and for those of us who believe that “we did not inherit nature for us to use as we like, but as a trust given in stewardship for those who will come after us,” reasons for growing in our capacity to look at creation with respect, awe and contemplation, and adjusting our attitudes, behavior and life-styles accordingly.

As a pro-environment ad says, "When the trees are all cut down and the rivers have dried up, we will realize we cannot eat money." We can't afford to let that happen.

May the Lord give us peace!

—ANTONIO MARIA ROSALES, OFM, [email protected]

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