

Meditation For Feb. 5, 2021

Pastor Perry's meditation of last week in which he talked about the wonderful early morning walk, during which he and Lore heard a pair of Great-Horned Owls, brought back a lot of memories of earlier days and of our own encounters with Great-Horned Owls and many other of God's creatures who call the Bruce Peninsula their home. Back in the early forties, Sherwood Fox, author of "The Bruce Beckons," observed that the Bruce Peninsula was the last true wilderness area in Southern Ontario; the ideal environment to support those creatures. Although there are still many areas on the peninsula that hint of those days, poor control of modern development, needless destruction of habitat, and simply too much human incursion, has seen much of that natural landscape disappear, along with the wildlife it supported. Many people have complained to me about the lack of birds at their feeders this winter. The Nighthawks and Whip-poor-wills I used to see flying over Howdenvale's grassy beach land on summer evenings have been absent for over thirty years, as have the Cedar Waxwings that were ever present around the cottage.

God put so much natural beauty on earth for us to marvel at, and so many fascinating creatures to populate land, sky and water. His intentions I'm sure we're that man, beast and bird should co-exist and support each other; for after all, it is a scientific truth that every living creature and plant is a link in a chain, without which each one cannot exist if a link is broken.

I remember one day on the Gulf of St. Lawrence, our tanker was moving along at fifteen knots, and a group of about twenty porpoises were cruising along with us; playfully leaping out of the water ahead of us and along both sides. Another day, I noticed the ocean along the horizon appeared to be popped as if there was some unusual disturbance in the sea. My wheelsman, a young fellow from Newfoundland, explained that Blue Whales were feeding on a school of Herring, and the popping was caused by the panicked Herring, thousands of them, trying to leap out of the water. Often when tied up to a wharf somewhere, jellyfish would drift by, or curious seals would pop their heads out of the water for a look. Steaming up the St. Lawrence, where it meets the Saguenay River, we would often see whales feeding on the krill that was plentiful at this confluence of rivers; whales like the endangered Beluga, Minke, Killer, and Blue, and occasionally Sperm, Fin, Pilot, Grey, and maybe even Humpback whales. This is not an endless gift of natural life

that God has given us, and yet, despite urgent warnings, we continue to defile this God-given gift and pollute the land, air and sea.

It is not just our natural surroundings and creatures we are destroying; we are doing it to our domestic pets AND to ourselves. Over the years, Wendy and I have lost 13 of our dogs, several to cancer. The Oncologist at the veterinary clinic in Toronto, who treated the last dog we lost, a wonderful female American Fox Hound, said that over 50% of the dogs and cats that people have today will die of cancer, because it's in the air they breath, the water they drink, and the food they eat. That's a terrible indictment on what we have done to God's gift. We can help by reaching out to the various organizations that are dedicated to protecting our wildlife and by helping to educate people who simply aren't aware of the precarious position in which we have put this natural gift that God has given.

Brian Reis