

Recovering a Sense of the Sacred: Conversations with Thomas Berry

By Carolyn W. Tobin; Timberlake Earth Sanctuary Press (2012)

Reviewed by Lucy Slinger, FSPA Ecological Advocate

The gift of this book is the glimpse into another person's shift in world views or personal transformation. It's structured as a recounting of conversations Carolyn W. Tobin had with Thomas Berry from 1978 to his death in 2009. Each conversation is followed by Tobin's personal journaling and experiences of transformation and reflections. Coming to intimately know and understand the new universe story and all its implications for living a life where everything is sacred, this book is a guide for interdependence, transformation and communion. If you want to better understand the universal principles of differentiations, interiority and communion this is an ideal read. Hope filled, Tobin says, "Let the universe in all its marvelous differentiation teach me to celebrate differences in all the relationships in my life."

The Human Experience

Grassroots Films (2007); documentary; 90 mins.

Reviewed by Lucy Slinger, FSPA Ecological Advocate

This film tells the story of Jeffrey Azize and his buddies who—based on their experiences of living as homeless people in New York City, N.Y., with abandoned children in Peru and with victims of AIDS and leprosy in Ghana, West Africa—search for answers to the question "What does it mean to be human?"

Capitalism: A Love Story

Michael Moore/Overture Films (2009); documentary; 127 mins.

Reviewed by Lucy Slinger, FSPA Ecological Advocate

This film addresses the social and political impacts of capitalism. Catholic priests and bishops discuss sin and social injustices that result in the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer under the United States' capitalistic economic system. It shows people who are organizing and taking back foreclosed homes as well as factory workers refusing to be taken advantage of by banks. There is much food for thought in Moore's documentation of how capitalism grew, has impacted our democratic society and, in turn, the world's economy.

First Earth: Uncompromising Ecological Architecture

David Sheen/PM Press (2009); documentary; 87 mins.

Reviewed by Lucy Slinger, FSPA Ecological Advocate

This is a multimedia manifesto filmed on four continents. It proposes that earthen homes—those made of clay, sand and straw—are still the healthiest housing in the world and that our subdivisions should be converted to eco-villages.

In the Beginning Was the Spirit: Science, Religion and Indigenous Spirituality

By Diarmuid O'Murchu; Orbis Books (2012)

Reviewed by Lucy Slinger, FSPA Ecological Advocate

Have you ever wondered what connected the Holy Spirit and the Great Spirit? Pondered why the Father and Son (Jesus) seem to get more attention than the Holy Spirit in discussion of creation or salvation? This book has the answer and a fascinating proposition on how the Spirit is the creative aspect of creation, and the force that brings order out of chaos in an evolving universe. Not the easiest read but chock-full of fresh ways of viewing and thinking about the Spirit that is with us, in us and moves us and all creation.

Ecological Footprints: An Essential Franciscan Guide for Faith and Sustainable Living

By Dawn M. Nothwehr, Liturgical Press (2013)

Reviewed by Lucy Slinger, FSPA Ecological Advocate

The Franciscan vision is a powerful antidote to the challenges of moving to a more sustainable way of living today. This book provides compact yet well-documented chapters on the significance and influence of Francis of Assisi, Clare of Assisi, Bonaventure and John Duns Scotus with respect to the Christian responsibility and the environment. After presenting these key Franciscans' views Nothwehr provides in-depth chapters of the current status of key issues like water, food and climate change. Practical suggestions and discussion questions lead the reader to reassess ones' own sustainable practices in life. The Christian duty to care for creation and moral obligation is well supported in this text.