

A Reflection for Earth Day 2020
by Sr Nellie McLaughlin

Coronavirus: The Inside Story

My dear People

I invite you to a heart-to-heart conversation, it is long overdue.

Let me explain what I mean.

I will be honest: all I want is to breathe freely.

I have been in and out of 'ICU' over many years now

It is taking a huge toll on my ability to do what I was born to do, what I love to do.

That is, to give and nurture life in all its diversity, beauty and complexity.

Perhaps you don't understand or have forgotten:

My burning heart, the sun, makes all life possible in endless generosity, warmth and abundance.

The crashing waves, meandering rivers and melodious streams water life, growth and freedom.

The invisible air blowing about in dancing leaves, sporting clouds and gentle breezes ensures that all of life is maintained vital, fresh and energetic.

The alchemy of my soil fertilizes life and flourishing in texture, taste and celebration.

And all the while the companionship of all beings, in the seas, on land and in the skies adds colour, music and grace to life as it continues to unfold in our amazing universe.

My resources are indeed abundant but finite.

You are now crippled with respiratory problems and frantically trying to source ventilators

I understand that feeling so well and wish to do anything to alleviate that dilemma.

But I need your co-operation

I am life's respiratory system *par excellence* and I need to keep healthy and functioning

I want to breathe freely so that all of life might continue to live and flourish.

BUT

You are not just gradually but systematically gagging me, choking my frantic efforts to live. I am literally dying to live and give life.

My breathing is becoming more and more intermittent and laboured, even excruciatingly painful.

I have tried to reach you for help for many years now...

There was that appalling rupture in my ozone layer- very painful for life's processes – but you got together and stitched a healing process which brought me such joy and renewed faith in my earth-family.

This was short-lived, however, as CO₂ emissions escalate alarmingly, clogging my life-giving systems as I struggle moment by moment to create life and wellbeing for all creatures.

In recent years it is becoming more and more impossible for me to breathe freely....

I keep crying out appealing to your goodness born of life's innate spiritual depths.

I have endeavoured to get your attention in rapidly recurring life-changing phenomena, not of my making, eg. tsunamis, famines, droughts, floods, tornadoes, frightening ice-melt, choking oceans, deforestation, bush fires, wind storms, viruses. I naively thought that recent locusts swarms would alert you in their threatening multitudes and I even hoped that a child would manage to break open your obsessive/oppressive market- economy- armour but, alas, Greta too was ridiculed.

Coronavirus: Covid -19, perhaps another example of human interference, can, amid unbelievable suffering, become a much needed Spring/Easter awakening to a new, ever ancient, normal. A *kairos*, breakthrough opportunity, characterised by communal commitment to an economic and social recovery radically aligned to the Earth economy in its abundant yet finite richness. Let us together in trust weave this new dynamic of interdependent co-operation through healing and hope, generosity and reciprocity. May this become the signature tune for life unfolding in wellbeing, equality and prosperity for all beings in our Common Home.

The devastating loss of precious lives, the heroic efforts of front line staff – medical, political, educational, well-being, security, food, transport, domestic- must not be in vain. Believe me, I desperately, frantically, want to save lives but no longer have the stamina after so many years of depletion, especially in recent years.

When all is said and done - not when more is said *than* done - the choice is profound:

Please, please, please let me breathe freely *by the way you live* for only then will you and all beings enjoy the precious gifts of life, love and endless possibilities..

I await your response.

In warm embrace

Planet Earth.

(Nellie Mc Laughlin, is an Irish Sister of Mercy and a member of the Clogher Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation group.)

