

## LOKA SYMPOSIUM AGENDA

### FAITH IN ACTION FOR A FLOURISHING PLANET

May 28<sup>th</sup> to May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019

#### **May 28<sup>th</sup> Afternoon and Evening: Pre-Symposium Public Forum**

*University of Wisconsin–Madison Memorial Union, 800 Langdon Street – Tripp Commons Room*

12.00 PM: Arrivals and registration begins at Holy Wisdom Monastery

5.15 PM: Registration available at Tripp Commons, Memorial Union, UW-Madison

5.30 PM: Reception at Tripp Commons, Memorial Union, UW-Madison

7.00 PM: Welcome dinner for participants, donors and friends at Memorial Union, UW-Madison

#### **May 29<sup>th</sup> Morning: Symposium Begins, Holy Wisdom Monastery**

*Holy Wisdom Monastery, 4200 Co Hwy M, Middleton, WI 53562*

7.00 - 8.00 AM: Breakfast, Arrivals, Late Registrations

8.00 - 8.30 AM: Contemplative Practices to Benefit the Environment, led by faith leaders

8.45 - 9:00 AM: Welcome and announcements offered by Loka Initiative Director, Dekila Chungyalpa

#### **May 29<sup>th</sup> Morning: Flourishing People, Flourishing Planet**

Human flourishing is generally defined as a state of self-actualization and fulfillment for all people with an individual right to freedom, happiness and dignity and within the context of holistic well-being of the surrounding family and community. From a religious perspective, human flourishing often takes on reference to a perfect ideal, such as Jesus attending to the needs of others, or Buddha gaining enlightenment to alleviate the suffering for sentient beings. There is an implicit understanding that human flourishing necessitates the well-being of the sum and not just the parts. Expanding on this concept, a flourishing planet requires more than the judicious management and wise use of natural resources, it implies that the entirety of the planet must be in a state of good health, and for us to achieve that, nature and humanity would need to flourish in tandem, in harmony. What would that look like from a faith-driven and scientific lens? Is there convergence on what a flourishing planet should consist of, and the role of humankind as part of the flourishing?

9.00 - 10.30 AM: Panel 1: Planet, Body, Spirit

*Moderator: Jonathan Patz*

*Panelists: Father Joshtrom Kureethadam, Diana Liverman, Mary Evelyn Tucker*

- Father Josh Kureethadam: What is the flourishing of the spirit and body, humankind and earth from a religious lens? What does it necessitate from an ethical and communal point of view? (20 mins)
- Diana Liverman: What does a flourishing planet look like and what are some of the risks we are facing, especially from climate change? What kind of action is required for humans and other species to thrive? (20 mins)
- Mary Evelyn Tucker: Journey of the intersection between religion and ecology; its profound history and its potential future (20 mins)
- Panel discussion and Q&A session (30 mins)

10.30 - 10:45 AM: Recess

10.45 - 12.00 PM: Group Session. Break into 6 groups. Instructions provided separately.

- Three questions for the group to initiate discussion: Where is the greatest convergence among religions; whether in theology, scripture, approach, or practical application, towards a common vision and standard for human and planetary flourishing? What examples are the most compelling and why? What do they all have in common? (45 mins)
- Presentation back to all: Main conclusions (30 mins)

12.00 – 1.00 PM: Lunch

1.00 - 1.50 PM: Nature and meditative walk.

*Led by Cal De Witt, Greg Armstrong and Claire Bjork.*

### **May 29<sup>th</sup> Afternoon: The Role of Religious and Indigenous Leaders at a Time of Ecological and Climate Crisis**

We begin by examining our sensory experience of being in nature earlier to recognize that the environment is not external and alien to us. Our bodies are part of nature, of the planet and as we flourish, so it does and as it flourishes, so do we. Whether we create gardens or build cities, humans have always worked with the earth in order for it to meet our needs. Do we, therefore, bear a unique responsibility to nurture, conserve and administer balance so the planet flourishes? Faith leaders and indigenous culture keepers have been present throughout the history of environmentalism, often channeling humankind to care for nature as part of their spiritual commitment and continue to do so today. This session will examine the history of religious environmentalism and explore where we go next.

2.00 - 3.30 PM: Panel 2: Caretakers of People, Caretakers of the Earth

*Moderator: Roshi Joan Halifax*

*Panelists: Gary Besaw (Menominee Nation Representative), Paul Robbins, Reverend Sally Bingham*

- Gary Besaw: The sacred connection between people and our planet (20 mins)
- Paul Robbins: All creatures great and small; Our responsibility as caretakers to Earth's biodiversity and ecosystems (20 mins)
- Reverend Sally Bingham: Lessons learned from Interfaith Power and Light (20 mins)
- Panel discussion and Q&A session (30 mins)

3.30 - 3.45 PM: Recess

3.45 - 5.00 PM: Group Session. Break into 6 groups. Instructions provided separately.

- Three questions for the group to initiate discussion: What faith-led environmental or climate action has been the most influential so far? What challenges do faith-led movements face the most? Where should faith and science led collaborations focus, and could these be part of Loka Initiative's goals? (45 mins)
- Presentation back to all: Main conclusions (30 mins)

5.30 PM: Dinner

6.30 - 7.30 PM: Evening Session

Contemplative practices and performances for healing and restoring of community and planetary resilience led by women leaders from First Nations of the Americas.

Restoring Balance

*Leaders: Nani Myrtle Long, Janice Rice, Juanita Cabrera Lopez, Kimberly Blaeser, Lyla June Johnston*

### **May 30<sup>th</sup> Morning: Symposium Begins**

*Holy Wisdom Monastery, 4200 Co Hwy M, Middleton, WI 53562*

7.00 – 8.00 AM: Breakfast

8.00 – 8.50 AM: Contemplative Practices to Benefit the Environment led by faith leaders

### **May 30<sup>th</sup> Morning: Finding Courage to Build Tomorrow**

Communities of faith often engage in social activities, some of which are religious and some secular in nature. Through these collective practices, they establish or reinforce a shared view of what their faith consists of and the positive parameters of their identity. Can faith-led environmental activities emphasize the interconnection between individuals within the group and reinforce positive relationships through environmental and climate action? Can this approach

help address the psychological reasons for why people reject environmental and climate action on an individual level and lack of political will on a policy scale? Can it help environmental and climate advocates who experience despair and exhaustion?

9.00 - 10:30 AM: Panel 3: Finding courage for tomorrow

*Moderator: Jose Aguto*

*Panelists: Huda Alkaff, Susan Clayton, Lou Leonard*

- Huda Alkaff: Courage to conviction: how do we mobilize people of faith?
- Susan Clayton: How can psychology help us think about building connections that build personal and social resilience as well as facilitating our environmental and climate work? (20 mins)
- Lou Leonard: What do we learn from faith communities and how can we apply that to climate and environmental movements? (20 mins)
- Panel discussion and Q&A (30 mins)

10.30 - 10.45 AM: Recess

10.45 - 12.00 PM: Group Session. Break into 6 groups. Instructions provided separately.

- Three questions for the group to initiate discussion: What are the strengths and weaknesses of working individually or collectively? How do we link individual awakening and collective action to national and global change? How do we heal environmental and climate advocates who are struggling with despair and exhaustion? (45 mins)
- Presentation back to all: Main conclusions (30 mins)

12.00 – 1.00 PM: Lunch

1.10 - 1.50 PM: Nature and meditative walk.

*Led by Cal De Witt, Greg Armstrong and Claire Bjork.*

### **May 30<sup>th</sup> Afternoon: Resilience Building; From Concept to Implementation**

In psychological terms, resilience refers to the ability to adapt and bounce back from adversity, tragedy, trauma or stress. Similarly, climate resilience is the ability for human or ecological communities to bounce back from adversity and stress created by the impacts of global warming. The stronger the ecological integrity of an ecosystem, the more resilient they naturally are to disasters. Faith communities are often naturally resilient. Religious participation entails a shift from solitary to shared engagement with a community of like-minded people, creating conditions for companionship, sharing of sorrow and grief, cultivating forgiveness and learning calming techniques such as meditation or prayer. How do we take this abundance and scale it up to build resilience of the institution, the encircling society, the surrounding environment and the planet?

2.00 - 3.30 PM: Panel 4: Operationalizing Resilience Building

*Moderator: Dekila Chungyalpa*

*Panelists: Mingyur Rinpoche, Richard Davidson, Musonda Mumba*

- Mingyur Rinpoche: What are concrete ways to build spiritual and faith community resilience and how does that inform resilience building within environmental and climate work? (20 mins)
- Richard Davidson: How are inner, community and planetary resilience related and what can we learn from this? (20 mins)
- Musonda Mumba: Ecosystem restoration policy, societal change and spiritual resilience (20 mins)

3.30 - 3.45 PM: Recess

3.45 - 5.00 PM: Group Session. Break into 6 groups. Instructions provided separately.

- One question for the group to initiate discussion: How do we conceptualize and operationalize resilience building within ourselves, within our communities, within our movements? (45 mins)
- Presentation back to all: Main conclusions (30 mins)

5:30 PM: Dinner and End of Symposium; we invite reflections from all present.

## Event Locations

**May 28th: University of Wisconsin–Madison Memorial Union**

*800 Langdon Street – Tripp Commons Room ([map](#))*

**May 29 - 30th: Holy Wisdom Monastery**

*4200 Co Hwy M, Middleton, WI 53562 ([map](#))*

There are multiple buildings on the Holy Wisdom property. Overnight accommodations, panel presentations and breakout discussions will all take place in the Retreat and Guest House, the first building you encounter when coming up the driveway. Meals will take place in the dining hall located in the Monastery Building, located up the hill from the Retreat and Guest House.