



Creation Care Problem Solvers

Communion of Saints

by Anne Neuberger

The “Communion of Saints” is a community, like a family. This community is made up of all of us on earth and all those who have lived before us and are now with God. Among those with God are many people who worked for creation care.

If you are seeking a way to work for creation care, look to this community. They had a great variety of experiences, talents, and interests, such as writing about nature, photography, studying plants or certain animals, political involvement, film making, underwater studies, painting, exploring, and teaching.

Note: An adult should oversee all online research done by children.

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Ansel Adams, 1902-1984

Photographer, artist, teacher of protecting wilderness.

Anne Ball, 1808-1872

Botanist, algologist (studied algae)

Mary Ball, 1812-1898

Naturalist, entomologist (sister of Anne Ball).

David Brower, 1912-2000

Environmental advocate on many subjects; made the environmental movement part of our every day lives and helped us to see that the world is interconnected.

Norman Borlaug, 1914-2009

Called Father of the Green Revolution: developed viable technology to grow food better.

Harvey Broome, 1902-1968

Conservationist, founding member of the Wilderness Society.

Gerald Durrell, 1925-1995

Writer, naturalist, zookeeper (zoos as sanctuaries for animals).

Dian Fossey, 1932-1985

Zoologist, did extensive studies of mountain gorilla groups.

Jean Craighead George, 1919-2012

Award-winning writer for children about the environment and the natural world.

Pope John Paul II, 1920-2005

As pope, wrote extensively on climate crisis and the urgent need to live together peacefully (solidarity).

Doris Janzen Longacre, 1940-1979

Writer on healthy food, simple living and respecting others by careful use of food and other resources.

Cynthia Longfield, 1896-1991

Entomologist, expert on dragonflies, explorer.

Wangari Maathai, 1940-2011

Founded the Green Belt Movement, political activism around deforestation and human rights, won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004.

George Mottershead, 1894-1978

Zoologist, found of a zoo without cages.

Margaret "Mardy" Murie, 1902-2003

Called Grandmother of the Conservation Movement, wilderness preservation, writer, adventurer.

Arne Naess, 1912-2009

Philosopher, his writing and beliefs affected the environmental movement of the late 20th century; his belief that all creation is connected is called "deep ecology."

Sigurd Olson, 1899-1982

Writer, advocate for protection of wilderness, environmentalist.

Edith Marion Patch, 1876-1923

Entomologist, writer.

Edwin Way Teale, 1899-1980

Nature writer and photographer, his work helps scientists know about the environmental conditions in the United States from 1930-1980.

Mary Davis Treat, 1830-1923

Entomologist, botanist, writer.

These people worked to protect impoverished and repressed peoples and the environments they live in. They died because of their work.

The events in these descriptions are not meant for younger children. Older students should be advised that the content will be disturbing.

Ken Saro-Wiwa

(1941-1995)

Ken was a writer, television producer and activist in Nigeria. He fought against exploitation by a big oil company, knowing it was causing environmental damage. Surface and ground waters along with the air and crops became contaminated with carcinogens (cancer causing agents). Trees died, fish died, and cropland was destroyed. People lost their ways of making a living and became poor as a result. Children became malnourished. Frequently, fires burning off gas mixed with crude oil filled the air. An average of 240,000 barrels of crude oil were spilled each year.

All this destruction has caused Oginiland, Nigeria, to be labeled one of the most polluted places on earth.

In the midst of years of exploitation of his home and people, Ken and others worked for change through peaceful protests. The oil company did not take responsibility. The repressive government arrested Ken and eight others.

They were jailed for six months without a trial, mistreated, and not allowed to see family, lawyers, or doctors. Finally, there was a trial. They were falsely accused of murder, and hung.

The names of all the people executed at that time are: Ken Saro-Wiwa, Saturday Dobee, Nordu Eawo, Daniel Gbooko, Paul Levera, Felix Nuate, Baribor Bera, Barinem Kiobel, and John Kpuine

Twenty years after his father's death, Ken's son says his father would not see much difference in the land.

However, small changes are being made. He hopes his father did not die in vain.

[GoldmanPrize.org/recipient/ken-saro-wiwa/](https://www.goldmanprize.org/recipient/ken-saro-wiwa/)

<https://goo.gl/8PPQjz>

Chico Mendes

(1944-1988)

"At first I thought I was fighting to save rubber trees, then I thought I was fighting to save the Amazon rainforest. Now I realize I am fighting for humanity," said Chico Mendes about his work.

Francisco ("Chico") Mendes was born in Brazil, to a family of seringueiros (rubber tappers).

Rubber is used to make tires, pencil erasers, some food containers and many other things. It is made from the sap of a rubber tree. Chico and others tapped these trees to collect sap. This method does not hurt the trees. Getting resources from the earth but not harming it is called "sustainable agriculture."

Chico was only 9 when he had to start working with his father. Large rubber plant estates owned by a few wealthy people employed them. Though the Mendes family worked very hard, they were always poor as the estate owners did not treat them justly. Keeping workers uneducated also kept them from getting better paying jobs. They had to keep working for low wages paid by the estate owners.

Chico was determined to learn how to read. When a man named Ecclides Tavora arrived, Chico got his chance. Not only did Tavora teach Chico how to read, he taught all the workers about their human rights and how to work together peacefully to demand these rights.

In other parts of the world, companies (including some fast food companies) had become very willing to pay a great deal of money for beef. Companies with more money than the plantation owners could buy the plantations. These new ranchers used a "slash and burn"

method to destroy trees and other plants and create grazing land for cattle. The rain forest—one of the richest places on earth as it was home to many animals, insects, flowers and people—had been there for 180 million years. Much of it was destroyed in just a few years.

This caused families living there to flee. For them it meant they were homeless, without work, and soon hungry.

Chico used his reading, energy, and time to help others. He taught reading and helped other rubber tappers to come together to demand their human rights. One time they stood, arm-in-arm, to stop others from cutting down trees.

More and more people joined this fight for justice with Chico in the lead. He was arrested and tortured. In less than 25 years, nearly 1,000 people were killed trying to protect the forest and those who lived there, for the government protected the big ranchers.

And yet, Chico got native people and people from other parts of the world working together. He spoke with world leaders. Important organizations (United Nations Environmental Program, National Wildlife Federation, and others) listened to him. Because of him, the world was realizing the importance of rain forests and the injustices the rain forest people had suffered.

Of course, the ranchers and others saw Chico as a threat to their work. In 1988, a rancher shot and killed Chico. His death brought many great changes for the rain forest and the local people. He is seen as a hero who changed the lives of many people, and as the person who showed the world that destroying rain forests was destroying life on earth.

PBS.org/journeyintoamazonia/teacher_chico.html

Encyclopedia.com/topic/Chico_Mendes.aspx

Sr. Dorothy Stang

(1931-2005)

Dorothy was one of nine children in a lively, Catholic family. When she was 17, she entered the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. For several years, she worked in Arizona teaching children and helping those who were very poor. In 1996 she and four other sisters went to Brazil. She learned the languages spoken there.

Eventually she became a Brazilian citizen.

Sister Dorothy lived in great poverty, working for the poor people of the rain forest. She helped them learn about Jesus and prayed with and for them. She started 23 schools and taught adults how to work together. She became close friends with many of the forest people.

Why were these people so very poor? Because they lived in a rich place! The rain forest is filled with natural resources, which can be turned into many wonderful things. And wonderful things can be sold for a great deal of money. Loggers, ranchers and huge farming business (called agribusiness), bullied the forest people. Many of the aggressors were powerful and violent. They forced the people to give up their lands and destroyed the rain forest to set up their businesses.

The indigenous people were soon suffering from fear, hunger and homelessness. Sister Dorothy worked to help them. She also understood that losing the rain forest would eventually hurt everyone, for rain forests are the earth's lungs.

The big business people didn't care. Most of the leaders in Brazil didn't stop the destruction either. And many other Brazilian citizens didn't know about this suffering and waste.

Sister Dorothy studied laws. She talked with loggers cutting down trees. She went to government officers to report illegal use of land. The poor farmers, she said, had a holy and untouchable "right to aspire to a better life and work with dignity while respecting the environment."

Soon, those with power became angry with her. She received hate mail and was insulted. Many of the programs she started were shut down. Over and over she was threatened that if she did not stop, she would be killed.

But she remained faithful to the poor and to the forest for she knew God wanted both protected. She prayed for those who were against her, and trusted in God. She continued her work for many years.

In 2005, she was walking in the forest to meet some farmers who were being bullied by illegal loggers and ranchers when two gunmen stopped her. Though she blessed the gunmen, they killed her.

Two thousand people marched at her funeral. Hundreds of reporters came from around the world too. Her people

said. "Today we are not going to bury Dorothy. We are going to plant her. Dorothy lives!"

A few days later, the president of Brazil created two new national parks in the rain forest, made another one larger, gave protection to 8 ½ million more acres and stopped logging in some of the most important places.

Dorothy's spirit was growing.

SNDOhio.org/sister-dorothy/Expanded-Story.cfm

Berta Caseres

(1970-2016)

Born in 1970 in Honduras, Berta Caseres grew up in a time of much violence in Central America. Her mother was a courageous activist who cared for refugee people fleeing war in El Salvador. Berta graduated from college with a teaching qualification. She had four children.

She spent much of her short life fighting for the rights of native peoples in Honduras. And as the rights of native peoples are often connected with the use of their lands, she was also an environmentalist. Her most famous work involved leading a campaign to pressure the world's largest dam builder to stop work on a dam in Honduras.

The dam (a series of four dams on the Gualcarque River) was planned by companies in China, Honduras and the World Bank's International Finance Corporation. They violated an international law requiring consulting with the local people. The locals were concerned that

the dams would hurt their access to water, food and medicine.

Berta worked with these people and took the case to the inter-American Commission on Human Rights. It took a long time, but eventually the Chinese and International group stopped the plans. (The Honduran company is still proceeding as of 2016).

For this work, Berta received important awards, including the Goldman Environmental Prize. But working for environmental justice in Honduras was very dangerous. In 2014, twelve activists were killed. It is one of the most dangerous places to defend forests and rivers. Berta herself was often threatened, and organizations called for her protection. But in March 2016, on a day when she was not protected, armed intruders came into her house and killed her.

See videos: LifePosts.com/p/milestone/284/berta-caceres-memorial/lifestory/

Nelson Garcia

1978-2016

Less than two weeks after Berta Caceres died, one of her fellow workers was also killed. Nelson Garcia had five children and was a community leader. His death happened just after the Honduran government had forced 150 indigenous people from their homes. With the use of bulldozers, the homes, banana trees, corn, and other plants of the people were destroyed.