

Dear ACS members

Four announcements/news/updates/reflections related to a week of both promising/exciting and awful/terrible events. Please, read to the end of this posting.

(1) We had a wonderful time in Ghost Ranch, New Mexico, during our Seventh ACS Symposium (June 18-21). During these 3 intense days, forty people shared, debated, and advanced ACS ideas, works, experiences, and more — all in the context of the stunning New Mexico desert that very much informed the symposium's topic: the role of nature and the quotidian as foundations of the sacred). Truly inspiring keynote lectures by Norman Crowe, Rina Swentzell, and Eliana Bormida / Eduardo Vera created the perfect contexts to go deeper and wider within as individuals and community and reflect on our ACS commitments and practices. We managed to have a day long field trip to the Taos Pueblo and Dar al Islam, and enjoyed a memorable night hike in the desert where we saw the night sky in all its glory. Prior to the meeting, the 6 members of the ACS Executive Committee met for 2 days with the goal of assessing the past 8 years of our organization and envisioning the next steps. We'll post photos of ACS7 as well as share news about new initiatives of ACS (including the ACS 8 Symposium to take place in New Harmony, Indiana in June 2016) in the coming weeks. As you all know, extended abstracts of all the works presented at Ghost Ranch are available at :

<http://www.acsforum.org/symposium2015/papers.htm>

(2) An interesting news that is very related to the place where we just held our symposium, is that June 19-24 has been declared the "2015 NATIONAL SACRED PLACES PRAYER DAYS". ACS member Lindsay Jones offered this information:

**Observances and ceremonies will be held across the land on June 19-24 to mark the 2015 National Days of Prayer to Protect Native American Sacred Places.** The observance in Washington, D.C. will be held on Friday, June 19, at 8:30 a.m., on the United States Capitol Grounds, West Front Grassy Area Nine (see details under Washington, D.C. in the alphabetical listing by state on the following pages).

Descriptions of certain sacred places and threats they face, as well as times and places for public commemorations, are listed in these pages. Some of the gatherings highlighted in this release are educational forums, not religious ceremonies, and are open to the general public. Others are ceremonial and may be conducted in private. In addition to those listed below, there will be observances and prayers offered at other sacred places that are under threat and at those not endangered at this time.

"Native and non-Native people gather at the Solstice and other times for ceremonies and events to honor sacred places. Everyone can participate in the National Prayer Days as a reminder to honor these precious lands and waters all the time by simply respecting them and not allowing them to be harmed," said Suzan Shown Harjo (Cheyenne & Hodulgee Muscogee). She is President of The Morning Star Institute, which has organized the National Sacred Places Prayer Days since 2003. "Observances are necessary," she said, "in order to call attention to Native Peoples' myriad struggles with developers that are endangering or harming Native sacred places

For more: <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/06/15/national-sacred-places-prayer-day-coming-160726>

(3) An important, exciting, and promising event that took place in the past week was Pope Francis' Encyclical "*Laudato Si'*" which, regardless of its coming from a Catholic or Christian faith, is a historically landmark in how a major religion recognizes the intimate relationship between taking care of earth, human development, and spirituality.

[http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_ enciclica-laudato-si.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_ enciclica-laudato-si.html)

(4) Lastly, we learned of the awful and despicable racist act in Charleston, South Carolina, committed during a most sacred moment (prayer) and holy ground (church). We all should not only utterly condemn such event but vow that our efforts help to shed light and dispel the ignorance and hatred that, clearly, still lives in our midst.

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*"leap and the net will appear"*