Reflection paper about the role of biodiversity conservation in your own vocation
Due 9 June to FEBC152@gmail.com; worth 10% of the grade; ~about 1000 words.

The word “vocation” comes from the Latin *vocare* meaning to call or be called. Thus, vocation means a calling or a moral purpose for your life. When one finds one’s vocation, one finds out how to live a good life, to make a contribution to the betterment of the world. It may or may not be religious. Many persons who use the word vocation refer to themselves as spiritual, although one need not be religious or spiritual to use the term. A calling is often heard through listening to the needs of others and recognizing our own desire and capacity to respond. One definition of vocation is: the intersection of the world’s greatest needs and our own desires.

Jesuit education has always engaged in forming leaders with the moral purpose to serve the needs of society. This class has investigated the scope and severity of the biodiversity crisis, and examined how religious groups have found a vocation to care for the Earth and its creatures. Thus, most of our course has examined the vocational discovery process for other groups. This assignment asks you to now reflect on your own self and your own desire to respond, whoever you might be and whatever your desires might be. You can think of this assignment as asking for your own ethical response to the biodiversity crisis.

This assignment asks you to identify a couple of key points from the class -- especially from your research -- that have struck your imagination or conscience, and to explain the impact they have had on what you believe, how you want to live your life, and who you understand yourself to be as a person. You need not be religious to do this, but you may engage this dimensions of your life if you choose. Note that there is not one “correct answer” to this question. Instead I am looking for you to discuss the impact of the course on you, and to do so with integrity. I do not expect you to seek formal religious or environmental leadership as a result of this class, but rather to identify what dimensions of the biodiversity crisis — and the response of faith communities -- have most impacted you, your beliefs and your understanding of your vocation.

Begin by with a brainstorming. What parts of the class, Gottlieb, Wilson, Callicott, your research project have been most interesting? Most surprising? Most inspiring? List those and the reasons they caught your attention. What have you learned about religions that you did not know before? Then think about what you might be inspired to do. What kind of contribution would you like to make? What kinds of activities, lifestyle choices, or volunteer work attract you? Note that you need not get a job in this area to make a difference. You do not have to leave the country to make difference. You might simply focus on how you raise your family. Then convert this to an outline: first part is the material from the class; second part is the impact this has had on you and your beliefs this term; third part is what you would like to do in the future, from the present into the next couple of years.