

The still pilgrim considers a hard teaching

by [Angela Alaimo O'Donnell](#) in the [January 4, 2017](#) issue

"If you believe in the divinity of Christ, you have to cherish the world at the same time that you struggle to endure it."

—*Flannery O'Connor*

Not just love but *cherish* it, this world—
from the Latin, *carus*, to the French, *cher*—
meaning *dear*, meaning *costly*, *beloved*—
meaning *hold to your heart*, *handle with care*,
this world, from Old English, *weoruld*,
meaning *human race*, meaning *age of man*,
this world, meaning our earth and her heirs,
meaning all of us, here, now, if you can—

the suicide bomber, the killer cop,
the war-worn refugee at the door,
the racist, the rapist, the shooter and shot,
the filthy rich and the dirty poor—
this world, ever ancient and ever new,
not just love it, but act like you do.