

Monday, August 11, 2014

GLOBAL DAY OF PRAYER : CARE OF CREATION

“If you want to cultivate peace, protect creation.”
-- Pope Benedict XVI

Leader: Creator God, we praise you for the grandeur of the universe.

We praise you for the gift of Earth.

We praise you for the land, and we praise you for the seas.

We praise you for the great miracle of teeming life on our prolific planet.

We praise you for the cycle of growth and for the beauty of bursting blooms in springtime.

We praise you for the green growth of summer and the holy harvest in the fall.

We praise you for the infinity of different creatures on the land and in the sea, each unique in its own way, each fitting into the complex ecosystems you have gifted us with, each dependent on each other and the whole.

We praise you, our Creator. Grace us with a sense of our responsibilities to preserve and protect your precious gift, this garden, this Earth.

We praise you, Creator God, and we offer you our hearts and hands for the preservation of all of creation. Amen.

(From *Prayer for the Environment, Education for Justice*, educationforjustice.org)

First Reading:

“Creation...remains a kind of first revelation which speaks to us clearly of the Creator and which can lead us ever more deeply into the mystery of God’s love for us.”

(General Audience Address, Pope John Paul II, Vatican City, January 30, 2002)

Therefore, “love all of God’s creation, the whole and every grain of sand in it. Love every leaf, every ray of God’s light. Love the animals, love the plants, love everything. If you love everything, you will perceive the divine mystery in things.”

(*The Brothers Karamazov*, Fyodor Dostoyevsky)

Moment of Silence (How do you experience the presence of God in creation?)

Response: (Psalm 104: 1-3, 5-15)

Side 1: Bless God, O my soul. How great you are, my God! You are clothed in majesty and splendor, wrapped in a robe of light.

Side 2: You spread the heavens out like a tent; you built your high walls upon the waters above. You fixed Earth on its foundations so that it cannot be moved; you cover it with the deep as with a robe, the waters enveloping the mountains.

Side 1: At your charge the waters took to flight; they fled at the sound of your thunder, pouring over the mountains, settling into the valleys, down to the place you made for them.

Side 2: You set a limit they must never cross, nor shall they flood the land again. You set springs gushing in ravines, flowing between the mountains, giving drink to wild animals, drawing the thirsty wild donkeys.

Side 1: The birds of the air make their nests and sing among the branches nearby. From your place you water the hills. You fill Earth with the fruit of your works.

Side 2: You make fresh grass grow for cattle, and fruit for your people. You bring forth food from Earth, wine to make them rejoice, oil to make them happy, and bread to make them strong.

(Translation from *Psalms Anew* by Nancy Schreck, OSF, and Maureen Leach, OSF)

Second Reading: As a human community we are coming belatedly to the conclusion that the Earth is not just solely for human benefit and amusement. We are being challenged to acknowledge that all creatures have a legitimate claim to existence.

There is a growing sense that the fullness of divine energy and creativity manifests itself in virtually all forms of life – an insight traditionally nurtured by many aboriginal peoples, but largely bulldozed and buried in Western societies. To eradicate species wantonly is to contravene a fundamental mandate of our home – to love and respect life in all its richness and variety.

The created world is characterized by this wondrous variety of living things woven together, a vibrant web of life. The future belongs to those who give the next generations reasons to hope.

(*The Green Bible*, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, pp. 69-71)

Moment of Silence

Response: (Psalm 104: 19-25, 27-28)

Side 1: You made the moon to mark the seasons; the sun knows the hour of its setting. You form the shadows, night falls, and all the forest animals prowl about –

Side 2: The lions roar for their prey and seek their food from God. At sunrise they retire to lie down in their lairs. People go out to work and labor until the evening.

Side 1: O holy God, how many are the works you have created, arranging everything in wisdom. Earth is filled with creatures you have made: See the vast ocean teeming with countless creatures great and small.

Side 2: All creatures depend on you to give them food in due season. You give the food they eat; with generous hand, you fill them with good things.

(Translation from *Psalms Anew* by Nancy Schreck, OSF, and Maureen Leach, OSF)

Third Reading: Creating God, in you everything on Earth and in the heavens is bound together in perfect harmony. If we lose the sweetness of the waters, we lose the life of the land. If we lose the life of the land, we lose the majesty of the forest. If we lose the majesty of the forest, we lose the purity of the air. If we lose the purity of the air, we lose the creatures of Earth.

Open our eyes to behold your creation. Create in us a new spirit of awareness of our place in your delicate balance; transform our hearts that we may reclaim our sense of awe and wonder. Quicken our understanding that we may acknowledge our responsibility and strengthen our resolve to work with you for the healing of your creation. (“The Web of Life,” from *Earth and All the Stars*, edited by Anne Rowthorn)

Leader: Creator God, hear the prayers we bring before you this day: We pray for the waters of the world, that they may be restored to health and filled with bountiful life.

All: Help us respect and renew the Earth, O God.

Leader: We pray for the soil of Earth, that its richness be protected to assure abundant harvests for all.

All: Help us respect and renew the Earth, O God.

Leader: We pray for all creatures who share Earth with us, that their beauty and diversity will be preserved.

All: Help us respect and renew the Earth, O God.

Leader: We pray for wisdom for all human beings, that through God's grace and with God's help we will protect and respect this gift of creation God has placed in our care.

All: Help us respect and renew the Earth, O God.

Leader: For all of the intentions we hold silently in our hearts.

All: Help us respect and renew the Earth, O God.

(Adapted from *Earth Day Prayer Service, Education for Justice*, educationforjustice.org)

Closing Prayer: (Recite together)

God, I am happy this day.

Birds and angels sing and I am exultant.

The universe and our hearts are open to your grace.

I feel my body and give thanks.

The sun is warm, and the sea splashes the shore.

I drink in your creation with my eyes.

I listen to the birds' jubilee with my ears.

God, I rejoice in your creation and your people,

And I rejoice that you call me to be part of your loving family.

Bless this time.

Bless your land and people. Amen.

(Prayer from Ghana, Education for Justice, educationforjustice.org)

(Possible song for use with this prayer service: *Canticle of the Sun* by Marty Haugen.)