

Online Resource - Lenten Reflections

The Grace of Sacred Places

GOD REVEALING, GOD INSPIRING, GOD CHALLENGING

"Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us" St Francis of Assisi

2nd Sunday of Lent

He took Peter and John
and James and went up the
mountain to pray.
Lk 9: 28b-36

*"When we visit sacred sites we go
there with humility, perform our acts of
respect and then see what happens—we
surrender to the place rather
than try to 'control' it."
James Swan, Sacred Places.*



Image: goo.gl/3uLd2M

God Revealing.....

Sacred natural sites can be important places of reference for cultural identity: for an extended family, a clan, a tribe, a religious faith or entire nations that may root their identity in a specific place in nature. goo.gl/ZwSooP

Uluru (Ayers Rock) and Kata Tjuta (Olgas) are probably the most prominent sacred natural places in Australia.

They are part of Dreaming Tracks or songlines which connect other sacred places. Uluru is the largest rock outcrop in Australia, part of a large underground rock formation which includes Kata Tjuta. Most geologists hold that this formation is the remains of a 600 million year old sedimentary bed which was raised and folded by earth movements, then eroded so that the large rocks are left.

The Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara care for their sacred place. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) provides guidelines for the care and preservation of natural sacred places. www.iucn.org



Image: goo.gl/nR33P5

God Inspiring.....

God's Spirit graces us in surprising ways, in people and places we least expect.

Reflect on the inspiration of these people:

- Theologian Denis Edwards writes "We experience the Spirit as the nearness of God in the natural world. The Spirit is the unspeakable closeness of God in the experience of mountains, deserts, forests and seas, in the sense of being deeply connected with a place, and in the moments of real encounter with trees, flowers, birds, and animals".
- Bishop Kenneth Cragge wrote, "Before you approach another people, another culture, another religion you must first take off your shoes for the place you are approaching is holy".
- Pope John Paul II, when visiting another country, kissed the ground as a first gesture of respect.

Prayer:

God of light, lead us from the darkness of self-centredness into the light of God's infinite love in the complexity of life around us and learning to live with it happily.

".....It is essential to show special care for indigenous communities and their cultural traditions. They are not merely one minority among others, but should be the principal dialogue partners.."

Pope Francis, Laudato Si' #146.

God Challenging.....

Vicki Clark, Mutthi Mutthi woman writes, "We walk together on sacred ground. Black feet, white feet.... the Dreaming is ever present moving beneath our feet. The landscape is alive. Never deplete it to the point where it can never be replenished. Respect the land and engage in an ongoing relationship with it".

Go to your sacred place. Close your eyes to better feel the wind on your skin. Be aware of different smells. Look for trails of creatures. Keep a journal of your experiences.

A labyrinth is a prayer tool that enables you to walk along a spiral that represents the journey inward and then outward. Find a labyrinth near you and begin using it. When in Canberra, walk the labyrinth at the Centre for Christian Spirituality and Culture. goo.gl/vuMQ99



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