

# Online Resource - Lenten Reflections for Year A

# The Grace of Earth

GOD REVEALING, GOD INSPIRING, GOD CHALLENGING

*"Our Earth is talking to us and we must listen to it and decipher its message if we want to survive"* Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, 2007

## Introduction

Lent is a season of prayer and reflection to turn back to God. We reflect on the Gospel to remind us of God's gift of creation and Earth as mother of life. Six aspects of Earth's life support systems, each unique yet interconnected, are about life. They open us to new depths of the Gospel.

1. Atmosphere
2. Oceans
3. Fresh Water
4. Land
5. Plant Life
6. Animal Life

**This resource explores these six Earth life support systems as ways of God revealing, God inspiring, God challenging. We meditate in wonder and thanksgiving at the beauty and complexity of Earth's eco-cycles. We reflect in sadness and outrage at our human abuse. We ask for forgiveness and the grace of ecological conversion.**

The Earth is a prophet now. We must learn to listen to God revealed in life in all its forms and respond.

Scientists warn that Earth's life-support systems are reaching their limits. [www.newscientist.com](http://www.newscientist.com)

Earth is full of amazing grace. We now know more about Earth's story, from the mind-boggling cosmic beginning of the universe to the present. It was Abbe Georges Lemaitre, a Belgian Catholic priest/cosmologist who discovered what is now known as the Big Bang. [www.amnh.org](http://www.amnh.org)

**Before time began there was nothing and then 13.7 billion years ago there was a bursting forth of pure energy.**

**Expanding, it formed gaseous clouds. The lumpy parts became stars then galaxies.**

**Expansion into greater complexity gave elements and solar systems were born.**

**Earth was one of these, a 'goldilocks' planet, not too hot and not too cold.** [www.bighistoryproject.com](http://www.bighistoryproject.com)

*"The planet Earth is a single community bound together with interdependent relationships. No living being nourishes itself. Each component of the Earth community is immediately dependent on every other member of the community for the nourishment and assistance it needs for its own survival." Fr Thomas Berry cp*

Our knowledge of this Big Story means we can read scripture with new eyes opened to "God with us" in and through Creation. *"Where were you when I laid the foundation of the Earth?" Job 38:4.*

We can wonder at the diversity of the face of God revealed in the depth and breadth of all the aspects of life. Many of these we are still to discover.

If we learn how to listen better to the Earth, we can seize the opportunity to take a creative part in the next faith transition which incorporates the new evolutionary story. It is the story of creation for the 21st Century.

**"Many things have to change, but it is we human beings who above all have to change."** Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* #202



Mandalas are circles which symbolise the human relationship with the universe. This image is from *The Creation Mandala*, a booklet about the story of the universe by Fr Vincent Busch, Columban missionary in Mindanao.

**"Then the Spirit said:  
The habitats that grace the Earth  
Were there to hold you at your birth,  
And welcome you to the celebration  
Of Creation's transformation  
From my fire which grew to be  
A wondrous blue-green symphony."  
(See attached order form.)**

**During Lent:**

1. **Create your own Creation Mandala using recycled or natural materials. Incorporate into Lenten prayer.**
2. **Compose an Earth poem in thanksgiving for one of Earth's life support systems.**



**COLUMBAN MISSION INSTITUTE**  
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**Donation for resource 'The Grace of Earth', gratefully received.  
Donations can be made on the Creation Mandala order form.**



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# Creation Mandalas

Order Form  
Subanen Crafts

All products are hand crafted by the Subanen women in the Philippines.



#1. Creation Mandala Large **\$80.00 each**  
Large (44cm) including book *inc postage*



#2. Creation Mandala Medium **\$55.00 each**  
Medium (25cm) including book *inc postage*

*Suggested size for class rooms*



#3. Creation Mandala Small **\$40.00 each**  
Small (16cm) including book *inc postage*

Subanen Crafts is a livelihood project for Subanen women who live in the rugged mountains of Northwest Mindanao in the Philippines. Their handicrafts focus on the Sacred Story of the Universe and the Wonders of Creation. This focus honors the deep spiritual bond that the Subanen People have with their habitat. Through the Subanen Crafts project Subanen women are able to produce, promote, and market their art and jewelry. With modest incomes from the sale of their crafts the Subanen women can provide decent food, basic education, and proper health care for their families.

For more information visit: [www.subanencrafts.com](http://www.subanencrafts.com)



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## MANDALA ORDER FORM

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### YOUR DETAILS:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb: \_\_\_\_\_ P/Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please accept my:  Credit Card (Fill in details below)  Money Order  Cheque

Please debit my  VISA  MASTERCARD

### PRODUCT DETAILS:

NAME OF PRODUCT	#PC	QTY	AMOUNT
Creation Mandala Large	1		\$
Creation Mandala Medium	2		\$
Creation Mandala Small	3		\$

**DONATION TO COLUMBAN MISSION** \$

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**TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED** \$

NAME ON CARD (PLEASE PRINT)

EXPIRY DATE  
/

SIGNATURE