

# Online Resource - Lenten Reflections

# The Grace of Atmosphere

## 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

### Week 1 - Atmosphere

"It is written: One does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes forth from the mouth of God." Matt 4: 4

*"One of the oldest words for (the activity of) God in the Hebrew scriptures is the word "Ruach" which also means breath."*

*John O'Donohue*

**What image do you have of the breath of life?**

*"In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of every human being."*

*Job 12: 9,10*

**Try to imagine the atmosphere protecting the Earth. What do you think of?**

We pray in gratitude for the gift of the elements that together make up the atmosphere which makes our planet habitable, our home.



*Image source: flickr by Stenly Lam*

### God Inspiring.....

#### Meditation

#### Canticle of the Sun:

*"Praised be my Lord for our brother the wind, and for air and cloud, calms and all weather, by which you uphold in life all creatures." St Francis of Assisi*

Visual effects in the atmosphere give us beautiful imagery which inspires mystics, poets, musicians and artists. Spend time in an open natural place outdoors. Look at the clouds, smell the air, feel the air on your skin, use all your senses.

**Find a place to admire a sunrise or wonder at the behaviour of the weather and avail yourself of the breath of God. Praise God as St Francis of Assisi did.**

### God Challenging.....

Natural processes impact the atmosphere eg. volcanoes, biological decay, and dust storms. Different temperatures at the poles and the equator create a wide range of weather north and south. Since the beginning of the industrial revolution in the late 1700s, humans have been affecting the atmosphere through our actions to the point that we are bringing about actual climate change. [www.windows2universe.org](http://www.windows2universe.org)

*"If you had a globe covered with a coat of varnish, the thickness of that varnish would be about the same as the thickness of the Earth's atmosphere compared to the Earth itself."* This comparison makes it easier to understand that the atmosphere is vulnerable to the vast amounts of pollution we emit.

**Find out why scientists at the Vatican say Earth is now entering a new geological era called the Anthropocene. Discuss with friends, family. [www.casinapioiv.va](http://www.casinapioiv.va)**

Australians contribute disproportionately more per capita to greenhouse gas emissions. We must reduce our greenhouse gas emissions for the sake of all life. [www.unep.org](http://www.unep.org)

*"Climate change is a global problem with grave implications."*  
*Laudato Si' #217*

### Responding to God's call

1. Get involved in Catholic Earthcare's National Energy Efficiency Network project. <http://neen.org.au/>
2. Read Pope Francis' Laudato Si', Ch 1.



*"And God saw that it was good." Gen 1*

### Reflection

God's word is found in Scripture and it is also found in the natural world.

*"Who among all these does not know that the hand of the LORD has done this?" Job 12:9*

Genesis 2 tells us that God blew the breath of life into Adam.

Earth's atmosphere is what we breathe. Every breath we take is a gift from God.



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Columban Mission Centre  
PO Box 752  
Niddrie VIC 3042

Ph: +61 3 9375 9475 E: [info@columban.org.au](mailto:info@columban.org.au)

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