

Online Resource - Lenten Reflections

The Grace of Land

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 4 - Land

"He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva, and put this over the eyes of the blind man." Jn 9:6

God Revealing.....

Getting to know Land

Land is Earth's thin rocky crust, much of which is beneath the ocean. It is rich in minerals and gases. Geologists and palaeontologists tell us its 3.8 billion year story. Tectonic plates formed and continue to reform continents. The interaction of plates, oceans, volcanoes and ice sheets formed soils to support plant life. Healthy soil is vital to eco-system functions, landscape regeneration, food production. It is in the soil that seeds germinate and grow. Soil is a carbon reserve with the carbon contained in humus, charcoal and roots. *Here On Earth, Tim Flannery, The Singing Heart of the World, John Feehan.*

Reflection

Having a sense of groundedness in the land helps connect us to God, the source of our being. The natural elements which are contained in the land are also in us. Aboriginal peoples know this. Jesus used the soil to bring sight to the blind man.

How can the soil bring sight to us?

"We must never lose sight of how we have been created: from the earth and from the breath of God." Pope John Paul II, *On Social Concern* 1987.

All the parts that make up the land system: rock, soil, water, wind, sun, plant, animal, mineral, work in partnership and in co-operation. Fr Julian Tenison Woods, soil scientist observed this

when he wrote, *"the ridges in which the trees are growing must have taken ages before they could give the depth of soil necessary to support such growth."*

Pope John Paul II used to kiss the ground of each country he visited.

Why do you think he did that?

God Inspiring.....

Meditation

Landscape is not just there. It took millennia to come here. Landscape is the firstborn of Creation. John O'Donohue

On Ash Wednesday, we are reminded ritually with the words, "Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return."

The landscape of rocks, hills, valleys, horizons inspires artists, musicians, mystics to express something of God. The Hebrew meaning of the word Adam is "earth creature".



Take a handful of soil. Focus on where it may have come from, how old it may be, what life may have lived in it in the past, is living there now, what it may give life to, what it needs to be healthy.

We pray in gratitude for the land, its soil and its microbes, its minerals, its landscape of mountains, valleys and gorges.

Image source: Pixabay.com

God Challenging.....

Like the prophets, the Earth is telling us of the consequences of our choices. People, particularly those living in cities have become disconnected from the land.

How can we reconnect with land?

"For them (indigenous people) land is not a commodity but rather a gift from God and from their ancestors who rest there, a sacred space with which they need to interact if they are to maintain their identity and values."

Laudato Si' #146

Responding to God's call

1. Find a plot of land that you can call yours. Observe what happens there. Connect with it. Learn from it. Can you help replenish the soil?
2. One way is to learn about compost. Some ecologists talk about ADAM, the qualities of good compost. (A - aliveness D - diversity A - aeration M - moisture). Reflect on the traditional biblical interpretation of ADAM in the light of this. www.soilsforlife.org.au
3. Join a local bushcare or landcare group. Contact your local council.

"God has written a precious book, "whose letters are the multitude of created things present in the universe." *Laudato Si' #85*



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



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