

NEAR TO ALL WHO CALL

Near to all who call Ps 144

READ LECTIONARY ECOLOGICALLY

[Is 55, Ps 144, Ph 1, Mt 20]

*Guide us as you guide creation ... law of love
My thoughts are not your thoughts, my ways not your ways
The Lord is near to all who call
How good is the Lord ... compassionate to all
Avoid anything unworthy of the gospel of Christ
The kingdom of God is like a landowner
Why be envious because I am generous?
These gifts become for us the Eucharist of Jesus
Put into action the saving mystery we celebrate.*

Just as happens when we fall in love with someone, whenever he [Francis of Assisi] would gaze at the sun, the moon or the smallest of animals, he burst into song.

Pope Francis Laudato Si' #11

GREETING

The Readings invite us to remember that God is near and like the generous landowner who gives equally to all his workers. We ask forgiveness for taking for granted the gift of country and the people surrounding us.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

1. Signs - The Earth itself is a sign that God is near and compassionate. That our Church express gratitude to the scientists who help reveal our closeness to all Earth complexities ... we pray
2. Desert lands – The people of Israel dreamt of sitting beside rivers in the desert. That our national economic dreams of irrigated lands not lead to ecological vandalism ... we pray
3. Presence – God as Creator willed a diversity of species evolve to inhabit land and sea. That we learn from native people to enjoy their presence and protect their habitats ... we pray
4. Equinox - The Equinox shows the new life of spring and the maturity of autumn. That us read God's message in the seasons and monitor the rhythm of our lives ... we pray
5. Beauty - God gladdens our hearts with the beauty of wilderness. That we grow ways for disadvantaged young people to experience first-hand Earth's wonders ... we pray
6. Material world – God led his People to love their land. That we rejoice with scientists who love the material world and explain it with respect ... we pray

DISMISSAL

We have celebrated God-given power to be generous rather than grasping. Let us go forth on our mission to appreciate the land where we live and all people who share it.

SEASON OF CREATION

Six Eco-justice Principles help create a framework for advancing a creation time of prayer (Readings from the Perspective of Earth ed. NC Habel 2000, Pilgrim Press).

1. Intrinsic worth: the Earth and all its parts have value - not a place of 'exile'.
2. Interconnectedness: a community of mutually dependent life - not merely for 'human benefit'.
3. Voice: Earth can raise its voice in celebration and against injustice - not a 'passive object'.
4. Purpose: a dynamic cosmic design where all parts contribute to a goal - not 'aimless'.
5. Mutual Custodianship: parts function as partners to sustain diversity - not 'rulers'.
6. Resistance: Earth actively resists abuse - not a passive 'helpless victim'.

A sense of deep communion with the rest of nature cannot be real if our hearts lack tenderness, compassion and concern for our fellow human beings.

Pope Francis Laudato Si' #91

HYMNS

1. For the beauty of the Earth
2. Bless the Lord, my soul (Taize)
3. In faith and hope and love
4. Peace I leave with you, my friends
5. Though the mountains may fall



contemplation deepens the more we feel the working of God's grace within our hearts, and the better we learn to encounter God in creatures outside ourselves

Pope Francis Laudato Si' #234

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Introduce Catholic Earthcare during Sunday Mass.
- Inquire if Catholic Schools teach ecology.
- Explore resources on the US Catholic Bishops eco-web site www.catholicclimatecovenant.org

COVENANT

God acted in the Spirit hovering over the void (Gn 1:1-2) to grow Earth and creatures that were very good (Gn 1:31). The history of the People of God is one of adaptation as it moved across deserts, the fertile Egyptian delta to finally settle in the lands of Palestine. The nature parables of Jesus about the mustard seed sprouting and the yeast multiplying can be taken as images of an 'Evolution Covenant' (Lk 13:18-21). God is author of all Earth processes. Jesus was familiar with the changing seasons. He used their images of change to teach, slowly growing the understanding of his followers about who are children of God by praising the faith of the pagan Canaanite woman (Mt 15:28). An evolution covenant was reinforced socially under the Holy Spirit as Church communities grew across nations (Acts 16:9-10). The Spirit challenged Peter and Paul to accept God's children outside of Israel (Ac 10:34-36). Disciples must not be deceived by the simplistic but read the signs of the times and grow (Mt 24:4-6).

CHAMPIONS AND SAINTS

St Hildegard of Bingen wrote of the Earth as Mother ... it forms not only the basic raw material for humankind but also the substance of God's Son. She formed the nuns in her Rhine River monastery in the middle ages to celebrate a verdant God in poetry and song, and to use herbs for healing the sick. Singleton Mercy Sisters remember Sister Calasactus who in the early 1950s was promoting biology studies among the novices. Her garden was thick with trees and there was a special place for plants mentioned in the Bible. Such formation helped many 'trees to bloom in the desert'.

MYSTICISM

Ecological conversion adds a new dimension to Christian mysticism. Becoming aware that Earth underpins all life systems leads to humility before God's first gift and first revelation; widens theological attitudes and stretches the moral imagination. Ecological conversion helps cultivate patient reflection in preparation for choosing a vocation. To especially nourish the Christian ecological vocation Catholic Earthcare produced the Garden Planet DVD, organised a 2005 Climate Change Conference and published Regional ecological statements. Crowned in 2015 by the environmental encyclical of Pope Francis, Care for Earth is part of Church mission and a spiritual pathway for every believer. It is not optional.

ECOLOGICAL INSIGHT

Wilderness is a particular geological area where plants and animals have evolved and flourish undisturbed by human activities. Within its dynamic structure, wilderness carries the cumulative innate wisdom in the form of genetic memory over millions of years. Humans respect and care for wilderness as a gift of the eons. It conveys a sense of the beyond. Wilderness is good for the human spirit to contemplate with love in the present and is heritage for future generations. It is not to be harmed by insensitive tourism or be the victim of untested bio-technology. www.australianwildlife.org . www.madge.org.au

LOCAL CULTURE

Being hard-hearted is different to being hard-headed. Migration to Australia has always involved trauma. Current border measures might help save lives at sea but often do not make compassion for refugees visible. Integration to grow a nation seems better than exclusion. <http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/media-releases/28-new-detention-centre-a-hard-hearted-response-bishop>

*I miss you most
when I'm at sea the boat
sailing unaided on course I weep
bitter tears above the engine*

Lee Cataldi Letter

<http://www.poetrylibrary.edu.au/poets/cataldi-lee/letter-0189023>

The Spirit, infinite bond of love, is intimately present at the very heart of the universe, inspiring and bringing new pathways

Pope Francis Laudato Si' #238

