

Earth Day
Christ Church - 24 Apr 2016

Excerpts from Genesis 1

We are Easter People. We are awed by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and all the ways that God is making things new within our lives. As we continue in this Eastertide period, we aspire to continue to hold resurrection before us and to practice resurrection ourselves.

Today, we turn our attention to the love and care that we have been called to give to our Earth Home. Our precious Earth is in need of tender love and care.... the waters, the ground beneath our feet, the dwindling resources. We must all live here and too many live with unsafe water, starved, barren soil, and limited or no resources. It is never too late to act.

Listen to the voices of different people. We can let them open our hearts to the precious value of this Earth and encourage us forward.

Leafing idly through a book, I stop at a picture of Earth floating against the black velvet of space. [Continents] are visible under swirling white clouds, but the predominant color is blue. This was the one picture from the Apollo missions that told the whole story - how small the planet is in the vast sprawl of space, how fragile its environments are. Seen from space, Earth has no national borders, or military zones, or visible fences. Quite the opposite. You can see how storm systems swirling above a continent may well affect the grain yield half a world away. The entire atmosphere of the planet - all the air we breathe, all the sky we fly through, even the ozone layer - is visible as the thinnest rind. The picture eloquently reminds us that Earth is a single organism

Diane Ackerman
The Rarest of the Rare

The early Celts believed in “thin places” - geographical locations scattered throughout... where a person experiences only a thin divide between past, present, and future times; places where a person is somehow able, possibly only for a moment, to encounter a more ancient reality within present time; or places where perhaps only in a glance, we are somehow transported into the future.

Edward C Sellner

Wisdom of the Celtic Saints

Glo - thin places. So many felt in nature, where we can experience healing and renewed peace in the midst of our busy lives.

Oxygen

by Mary Oliver

Everything needs it: bone, muscles, and even,
while it calls the earth its home, the soul.

So the merciful, noisy machine

stands in our house working away in its
lung_like voice, I hear it as I kneel
before the fire, stirring with a

stick of iron, letting the logs
lie more loosely. You, in the upstairs room,
are in your usual position, leaning on your

right shoulder which aches
all day. You are breathing
patiently; it is a

beautiful sound. It is
your life, which is so close
to my own that I would not know

where to drop the knife of
separation. And what does this have to do
with love, except

everything? Now the fire rises
and offers a dozen, singing, deep_red
roses of flame. Then it settles

to quietude, or maybe gratitude, as it feeds
as we all do, as we must, upon the invisible gift:
our purist, sweet necessity: the air.

Myra Gaiser - This is an excerpt from Grounded by Diana Butler Bass -

For millenia, the ancients looked to the heavens, to the light of millions of stars above, to find God. Although the stars still move us to wonder, contemporary people are learning that the soil - the ground - beneath our feet is as mysterious, complex, and awe-inspiring as gazing into the night sky. "I was stunned by what I learned about life in the soil," says journalist Kristin Ohlson, "that when we stand on the surface of the earth, we're atop a vast underground kingdom of microorganisms without withi life as we know it wouldn't exist. Trillions of microorganisms, even in my own smallish backyard, like a great sea swarming with tiny creatures."

Bahnsen calls the soil a sacrament. The ground calls forth an ethical, more, and spiritual response. We are powerfully connected to the ground, and the soil is intimately related to how we understand and celebrate God. John O'Donohue called

the land the “firstborn creation” and the “condition of the possibility of everything.” The earth itself, he insisted, holds the memory of the beginning of all things, the memory of God. When Sally McFague offers the metaphore of “body” to describe the relationship between God and the world, she is reminding us of both scientific truth and a sacred mystery. “What if we saw the earth as part of the body of God, not as separate from God (who dwells elsewhere), but as the visible reality of the invisible God?”

What if, indeed! I suspect that if we did, we would be both more responsible toward the soil and more aware of God-with-us.

... Instead of seeing God as distinct and distant from the world, we are acquiring a new awareness that the universe itself is God’s body, a complex and diverse interdependent organism, animated by God’s breath, the spirit of creation. We are with God, and God is with us because We are in God, and God is in us.

Our awareness of the our Earth’s health.... is one of the things that drives us to our own personal activism.... our own advocacy. Like the Dr Seuss book, The Lorax, we do our part to speak for the trees.

Bob Gaiser - The Greenway Project

Little Summer Poem Touching the Subject of Faith

~ Mary Oliver in West Wind: Poems and Prose Poems

Every summer
I listen and look
under the sun's brass and even
into the moonlight, but I can't hear

anything, I can't see anything —
not the pale roots digging down, nor the green
stalks muscling up,
nor the leaves
deepening their damp pleats,

nor the tassels making,
nor the shucks, nor the cobs.

And still,
every day,

the leafy fields
grow taller and thicker —
green gowns lofting up in the night,
showered with silk.

And so, every summer [every day]
I fail as a witness, seeing nothing —
I am deaf too
to the tick of the leaves,

the tapping of downwardness from the banyan feet —
all of it
happening
beyond any seeable proof, or hearable hum.

And, therefore, let the immeasurable come.
Let the unknowable touch the buckle of my spine.
Let the wind turn in the trees,
and the mystery hidden in the dirt

swing through the air.

How could I look at anything in this world
and tremble, and grip my hands over my heart?
What should I fear?

One morning
in the leafy green ocean
the honeycomb of the corn's beautiful body
is sure to be there.

Glo - Mary speaks for us. We have been blind. We have ignored what is
going on all around us. Mary is calling us to listen, to look to notice.... and
to act.

There are countless scripture passages that are full of praise for the gift of
our awesome home - Psalm 148

Praise the Lord from heaven!

Praise God on the heights!

Praise God, all of you who are his messengers!

Praise God, all of you who comprise his heavenly forces!

Sun and moon, praise God!

All of you bright stars, praise God!

You highest heaven, praise God!

Do the same, you waters that are above the sky!

Let all of these praise God's name

Praise the Lord from the earth,

you sea creatures and all you ocean depths!

Do the same, fire and hail, snow and smoke,

stormy wind that does what God says!

Do the same, you mountains, every single hill,
fruit trees, and every single cedar!

Do the same, you animals—wild or tame—
you creatures that creep along and you birds that fly!

Do the same, every single person on earth,
and every single ruler on earth!

Do the same, you young men—young women too!—
you who are old together with you who are young!

Praise the Lord!

Glo - And from Revelations 21: ! “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth.” Our earth is hurting. Our earth and many of its creatures are struggling. It is not too late for us to take action.... to do our part, and to advocate for future generations. What are we leaving for them.

Let us be in prayer together as Roger reads this from St Francis

Roger White -

The Canticle of Creation (by Saint Francis of Assisi)

O Most High, all-powerful, good Lord God,
to you belong praise, glory,
honour and all blessing.

Be praised, my Lord, for all your creation
and especially for our Brother Sun,
who brings us the day and the light;
he is strong and shines magnificently.

O Lord, we think of you when we look at him.

Be praised, my Lord, for Sister Moon,
and for the stars

which you have set shining and lovely
in the heavens.

Be praised, my Lord,
for our Brothers Wind and Air
and every kind of weather
by which you, Lord,
uphold life in all your creatures.

Be praised, my Lord, for Sister Water,
who is very useful to us,
and humble and precious and pure.

Be praised, my Lord, for Brother Fire,
through whom you give us light in the darkness:
he is bright and lively and strong.

Be praised, my Lord,
for Sister Earth, our Mother,
who nourishes us and sustains us,
bringing forth
fruits and vegetables of many kinds
and flowers of many colours.

I praise and bless you, Lord,
and I give thanks to you,
and I will serve you in all humility.

Today we remember.... And God said, "It is good." We are blessed with a beautiful place to live, with God's abundance all around. Yet, in our short-sightedness, and our demand for resources.... right now, we see our earth suffering. May we each do our part to care for the earth.

"For the Beauty of the Earth"

Messenger

by Mary Oliver

My work is loving the world.

Here the sunflowers, there the hummingbird—
equal seekers of sweetness.

Here the quickening yeast; there the blue plums.

Here the clam deep in the speckled sand.

Are my boots old? Is my coat torn?

Am I no longer young, and still not half_perfect? Let me

keep my mind on what matters,
which is my work,

which is mostly standing still and learning to be
astonished.

The phoebe, the delphinium.

The sheep in the pasture, and the pasture.

Which is mostly rejoicing, since all the ingredients are here,

Which is gratitude, to be given a mind and a heart
and these body_clothes,

a mouth with which to give shouts of joy

to the moth and the wren, to the sleepy dug_up clam,
telling them all, over and over, how it is
that we live forever.