



A DAY OF PRAYER -

A Faith Reflection to Climate Change

5th of June 2009

World Environment Day

**the natural world in its most
profound sense of mystery as
a manifestation and experience
of the sacred**

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We are aware that the earth was born and is borne by a delicate dynamic of forces, which converged to become the integrity of our planet. We are enchanted by the splendor of its life emergence, of which we are but a part.

Yet at the very time we are awestruck by this wondrous disclosure, we are stunned by the cumulative significance of human insensitivity to the natural world. We are informed, as never before, that the earth is subject to possibly irreparable damage to the primordial pattern of life-sustaining processes.

The spiritual challenge of the ecological crisis draws us back to our religious traditions, to reflect on and celebrate the natural world in its most profound sense of mystery as a manifestation and experience of the sacred. We humans find not only our place but also our presence to the sacred in this phenomenal emergence.

Earth and Faith: A Book of Reflection for Action
Interfaith Partnership for the Environment and UN Environment Program



REFLECTION ON:
"Care of the Earth"

The opening words of John's Gospel present the cosmic Christ:

In the beginning was the Word;
The Word was in God's presence
And the Word was God.
He was present to God in the beginning.
Through him all things came into being,
And apart from him nothing came to be.

The Eucharist is one of the most central and transformative prayers of Christianity; it presents the things of Earth through which God is made present:

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation.
Through your goodness we have this bread to offer,
Which earth has given and human hands have made.
It will become for us the bread of life.

The Roman Missal

Christian tradition is clear in its admonition against the misuse of creation and the creatures:

The high, the low all of creation,
God gives to humankind to use.
If this privilege is misused,
God's Justice permits creation to punish humanity.

Hildegard of Bingen

We find ourselves ethically destitute just when, for the first time, we are faced with ultimacy, the irreversible closing down of the earth's functioning in its major life systems. Our ethical traditions know how to deal with suicide, homicide and even genocide, but these traditions collapse entirely when confronted with biocide, the killing of the life systems of the earth, and geocide, the devastation of the earth itself.

Thomas Berry, 1996

“Today the great gift of God's Creation is exposed to serious dangers and lifestyles which can degrade it. Environmental pollution is making particularly unsustainable the lives of the poor of the world...we must pledge ourselves to take care of creation and to share its resources in solidarity.”

Benedict XVI

“The world is not something indifferent, raw material to be utilized simply as we see fit. Rather, it is part of God’s good plan, in which all of us are called to be sons and daughters in the one Son of God, Jesus Christ (cf. Eph 1:4-12). The justified concern about threats to the environment present in so many parts of the world is reinforced by Christian hope, which commits us to working responsibly for the protection of creation. The relationship between the Eucharist and the cosmos helps us to see the unity of God’s plan and to grasp the profound relationship between creation and the ‘new creation’ inaugurated in the resurrection of Christ, the new Adam.”

Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 2007, no. 92

“Respect for life and for the dignity of the human person extends also to the rest of creation, which is called to join humankind in praising God.”

John Paul II, 1990 World Day of Peace Message, no. 16.



**~ Song of the Soul That Delights in
Knowing God by Faith ~**

John of the Cross

Well I know the fountain that runs and flows,
Though it is night!

This eternal fountain is hidden deep.
Well I know where it has its spring,
Though it is night!

In this life’s dark night,
Faith has taught where this cold fountain lies,
Though it is night!

Its origin I cannot know, it has none,
And I know all origins come from it,
Though it is night!



Christ of St. John of the Cross - Salvador Dalí (1951)

And I know there can be nothing more fair,
The heavens and earth drink there,
Though it is night!

And I know it has no bed,
And I know no one can cross its depths,
Though it is night!

Its clarity is never clouded,
And I know all light shines from it,
Though it is night!
The current born of this fountain
I know to be wide and mighty,
Though it is night!

And from these two another stream flows,
And I know neither comes before,
Though it is night!

I know Three in only one water live,
And each the other feeds,
Though it is night!

This eternal fountain is hiding from sight
Within this living bread to give us life,
Though it is night!

He calls all creatures to this light,
And of this water they drink, though in the dark,
Thought it is night!

This living fountain I desire,
I see it here within this living bread,
Though it is night!



“Our mistreatment of the natural world diminishes our own dignity and sacredness, not only because we are destroying resources that future generations of humans need, but because we are engaging in actions that contradict what it means to be human. Our tradition calls us to protect the life and dignity of the human person, and it is increasingly clear that this task cannot be separated from the care and defense of all creation.”

Renewing the Earth: An Invitation to Reflection and Action on Environment in Light of Catholic Social Teaching, 1991, 2.

“As individuals, as institutions, as a people, we need a change of heart to preserve and protect the planet for our children and for generations yet unborn.”

Renewing the Earth: An Invitation to Reflection and Action on Environment in Light of Catholic Social Teaching, 1991,3.



PRAYER WITH SYMBOLS

WATER:

Protect fresh water resources

Protect oceans, coral reefs, coastal areas and small islands.

AIR:

Protect the atmosphere by combating climate change and transboundary air pollution.

SOIL:

Conserve biological diversity.
Combat deforestation and desertification
Protect land resources from nitrogen overload

+ + +

“Light and darkness, wind and fire, water and earth, the tree and its fruit speak of God and symbolize both God’s greatness and nearness.”

Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1147

Let us Pray

God of the sun and the moon
Of the mountains, deserts and plains
God of the mighty oceans, of rivers, lakes and streams
God of all creatures that live in seas and fly in the air
Of every living thing that grows and moves on this sacred Earth.

We are formed by Christ into Your People
Called to bring the world into Your marvelous light
As the Body of Christ, we are messengers of ecological vocation
We are entrusted with caring for this Earth which You have created.

Help us to love and respect it
To repair what we have damaged
To care for what You have made good and holy
Give us the wisdom and the passion to change our minds, our hearts and our ways.

Let us be mustard seeds in our world
Bringing about ecological conversion which grows and

Spreads to every corner of the Earth
For our sake now and for every generation which is to come
We ask this through Christ, Our Lord. Amen

Catholic Earthcare Australia, 2002



ACTIONS WE CAN TAKE

- ~ abstain from eating meat on June 5th
- ~ follow environmental issues in newspapers, magazines, radio and television
- ~ plant trees or bushes to combat the high levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere
- ~ reduce consumption, reuse, and recycle
- ~ change your light bulbs to energy efficient bulbs
- ~ enjoy nature and live in harmony with it.



WEBSITES OF INTEREST:

United Nations Environment Program – www.UNEP.org

Catholic Coalition on Climate Change –
www.catholicsandclimatechange.org

Ecological Internet – www.ecologicalinternet.org



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**For more information about us and our work,
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