

PRAYER GROUP

August 12, 2020

A TIME FOR A CHECK-IN

GREETING

Leader: Jesus said,
“Where two or three are gathered in my name,
there am I, in the midst of them.”

LIGHTING THE CANDLE

Leader: We light this candle as a reminder that Jesus,
who is for us the light of the world,
will be with us always,
even until the end of the age.

PRAYER

Reader: Christ, as a light illumine and guide us.
Christ, as a shield overshadow us.

All: **Christ under us; Christ over us;
Christ beside us on our left and our right.**

Reader: This day be within and without us,
lowly and meek, yet all-powerful.

Reader: Be in the heart of each to whom we speak;
in the mouth of each who speaks unto us.

Reader: This day be within and without us,
lowly and meek, yet all-powerful.

All: **Christ as a light; Christ as a shield;
Christ beside us on our left and our right.**

AN INVITATION INTO STILLNESS

Hear and feel the quiet of this place
and this community of people.

Hear and feel your quiet breathing.

Inhale the good gifts that God provides,
and exhale all of the things
that you need to release.

Breathe in strength. *(Pause for breath...)*

Exhale exhaustion. *(Pause for breath...)*

Breathe in freedom. *(Pause for breath...)*

Exhale all that holds you back. *(Pause for breath...)*

Breathe in a new sense of direction. *(Pause for breath...)*

Exhale the paths you no longer want to use.

Breathe in hope. *(Pause for breath...)*

Exhale self-doubt. *(Pause for breath...)*

Breathe in unconditional love. *(Pause for breath...)*

Exhale distrust and hate. *(Pause for breath...)*

In this time of prayer,
may our minds be open to new truth,
and our hearts be receptive to love.

Let us open ourselves to the Spirit of Christ
in our midst.

A READING *Psalm 104*

¹ Bless the LORD, O my soul.

O LORD my God, you are very great.
You are clothed with honour and majesty,
² wrapped in light as with a garment.

You stretch out the heavens like a tent,
³ you set the beams of your^[a] chambers on the waters,
you make the clouds your^[b] chariot,
you ride on the wings of the wind,
⁴ you make the winds your^[c] messengers,
fire and flame your^[d] ministers.

⁵ You set the earth on its foundations,
so that it shall never be shaken.
⁶ You cover it with the deep as with a garment;
the waters stood above the mountains.

⁷ At your rebuke they flee;
at the sound of your thunder they take to flight.
⁸ They rose up to the mountains, ran down to the valleys
to the place that you appointed for them.

⁹ You set a boundary that they may not pass,
so that they might not again cover the earth.

¹⁰ You make springs gush forth in the valleys;
they flow between the hills,
¹¹ giving drink to every wild animal;
the wild asses quench their thirst.

¹² By the streams^[e] the birds of the air have their habitation;
they sing among the branches.

- 13 From your lofty abode you water the mountains;
the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work.
- 14 You cause the grass to grow for the cattle,
and plants for people to use,^[f]
to bring forth food from the earth,
15 and wine to gladden the human heart,
oil to make the face shine,
and bread to strengthen the human heart.
- 16 The trees of the LORD are watered abundantly,
the cedars of Lebanon that he planted.
17 In them the birds build their nests;
the stork has its home in the fir trees.
- 18 The high mountains are for the wild goats;
the rocks are a refuge for the coneys.
- 19 You have made the moon to mark the seasons;
the sun knows its time for setting.
20 You make darkness, and it is night,
when all the animals of the forest come creeping out.
- 21 The young lions roar for their prey,
seeking their food from God.
22 When the sun rises, they withdraw
and lie down in their dens.
- 23 People go out to their work
and to their labour until the evening.
- 24 O LORD, how manifold are your works!
In wisdom you have made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.

25 Yonder is the sea, great and wide,
creeping things innumerable are there,
living things both small and great.

26 There go the ships,
and Leviathan that you formed to sport in it.

27 These all look to you
to give them their food in due season;

28 when you give to them, they gather it up;
when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.

29 When you hide your face, they are dismayed;
when you take away their breath, they die
and return to their dust.

30 When you send forth your spirit,^[g] they are created;
and you renew the face of the ground.

31 May the glory of the LORD endure for ever;
may the LORD rejoice in his works—

32 who looks on the earth and it trembles,
who touches the mountains and they smoke.

33 I will sing to the LORD as long as I live;
I will sing praise to my God while I have being.

Bless the LORD, O my soul.
Praise the LORD!

CHAPTER 7: Earth As The Original Liturgy

1. We have separated ourselves from creation by claiming consciousness only for ourselves. All elements of creation participate in this primordial cathedral, scriptures, saints, spiritual directors, icon, sacrament, and liturgy offering wisdom to us with each turn. These sacred places of encounter with the Divine are profoundly embodied.

What wisdom have you discovered in the primordial cathedral of nature, in scriptures, from saints, spiritual directors, icon, sacrament, or liturgy? How can you not feed your soul when you are immersed in riches such as these?

2. The psalms see all of creation itself as offering continual praise to God. The sea, the sky, the trees, the animals, the stars—all these are seen to be singing God's glory without human words but with another kind of language. All of creation is called to praise the sacredness of all things.

Have you accepted the invitation to join the continual and ever-unfolding chorus of celebration happening all around you? Does your praise arise from your heart as spontaneously as it does from pines and panthers, from the sea and sloths?

3. In an old Irish poem about a mistle thrush, the bird is celebrated for its beauty and described as giving an "impromptu sermon" that teaches his listeners much about the goodness of God. The bird is not only sacrament but also preacher and liturgist, offering his own perspective on celebration of the Divine Source."

What impromptu sermon have you heard from the birds who share your sacred space?

4. The psalms of praise often describe nature as alive and in perpetual celebration. Thomas Merton saw his call as a monk to listen for the song being sung through all of creation. He was invited to join in with this original liturgy already happening all around him.

When do you make time to touch the paradise that pulses all around us?

5. All of nature sings glory to God, even the seasons themselves. The liturgical calendar reflects the seasonal cycle of dying and rising. Nature has her own liturgy ... feast days in the calendar of creation's unfolding, times to celebrate as nature offers up her signs of what is to come.

What feast day in nature's liturgy are you celebrating today? What liturgical hour are the birds singing you all the way back home to?

6. We can come to know Earth as whole in this moment, while also acknowledging the great work we must do to restore the wholeness out of the destruction we have wrought. Practicing paradise is one way to restore wholeness and is built on the idea of a 'life free from care'.

What do you need to change in your life to live a meaningful and unburdened life? How does your life's purpose and meaning differ from what society thinks is valuable? C

A PRACTICE TO TRY—“Liturgy for Earth”—*Visual Art Exploration*

Create a liturgy for Earth. Gather together prayers and poems that are meaningful for you. Include some time for lament and grieving Earth’s suffering. Play music that connects you to Earth, whether songs about creation or the songs of creation—such as the songs of humpback whales or the sound of ocean waves. Include a ritual act—some physical embodiment of your commitment to the natural world. Follow your own impulse to offer some gesture to Earth in prayer.

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

(Richard Rohr)

O Great Love, thank you for living and loving in us and through us. May all that we do flow from our deep connection with you and all beings.

Help us become a community that vulnerably shares each other’s burdens.

Listen to our hearts’ longings for the healing of our world...

THE LORD’S PRAYER

WORDS OF BLESSING

Deep peace of the running wave to you.

Deep peace of the flowing air to you.

Deep peace of the quiet earth to you.

Deep peace of the shining stars to you.

Deep peace of the infinite peace to you.