

**Prayers for Creation:  
An EcoSchools Resource**



**Compiled by the Committee for Social Justice and the  
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## A Child's Prayer for the Earth

Thank you for the sun,  
the sky,  
for all the things that like to fly,  
the shining rain that turns grass green,  
the earth we know -  
the world unseen -  
for stars and night, and once again  
the every-morning sun. Amen.

-Myra Cohn Livingston  
from "On the Farm - Poems Selected by Lee Bennett  
Hopkins", Illustrated by Laurel Molk,  
Little, Brown & Company (Canada) Limited.



## Earth Day Celebration (1)

### Preparations:

- celebration table (two level) covered with green and blue coverings in the center of the gym
- a raised globe surrounded by candles on higher table
- four designated places (placemats) for gifts
- large plants
- bible stand, bible and candle near table
- slide projector on rolling table
- overhead on rolling table
- gifts of the earth plant/flower, glass bowl with soil, glass vase with water, rocks or shells, CD player or live musicians
- students sit in circle around celebration table
- lights dimmed and candles lit before students enter

*Reminder: turn off fans in gym to reduce noise level*

### Suggested Opening Song: Rhythm of the Earth

**Introduction:** We are surrounded by the goodness of God through the world in which we live - the beauty of the earth with its light, darkness, land, water, plants, animals and humans, reflect God's care and love. Today we are celebrating God's gifts of creation. We will now carry up four gifts which symbolize our earth.

1. We celebrate the gift of water which provides life for all creation  
Response: We thank you God for this gift.
2. We celebrate the gifts of rocks, shells and minerals.  
Response: We thank you God for this gift.
3. We celebrate the gifts of plants, flowers, and trees which give us air, beauty, medicine and food.  
Response: We thank you God for this gift.
4. We celebrate the gift of soil in which we plant seeds for food and survival.  
Response: We thank you God for this gift.

### Readings

*A slide presentation is presented during the reading. Eight adult readers equipped with small flashlights read from various places around the room or a central place with a microphone.*

*Readers are requested to read slowly.*

**Leader:** We now invite you to listen to the creation story adapted from the Book of Genesis in the Bible First Reading from the Book of Genesis.

- Reader 1:** (6 slides are shown):  
In the beginning, /  
God created the heavens and the earth./  
Now the earth was a formless void./  
There was darkness/ over the deep./  
God's spirit hovered over the water,/  
and God saw that it was good./
- Reader 2:** (6 slides):  
God said, "Let there be light and there was light;/  
God saw that light was good./  
God divided light from darkness./  
God called/  
the light 'day'"/  
and the darkness 'Night'./
- Reader 3:** (6 slides):  
God said, "Let the waters under the heavens come together into a single  
mass/  
and let dry land appear."/  
And so it was./  
God called the dry land, 'earth'/  
and the mass of waters, 'seas'/  
and God saw that it was good./
- Reader 4:** (6 slides):  
God said, "Let the earth produce vegetation;/  
seed-bearing plants/  
and trees bearing fruit/  
with their seeds inside./  
And so it was./  
And God saw that it was good./
- Reader 5:** (6 slides):  
God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky/  
to separate day from night and mark the fixed times./  
God made the two great lights, the greater one to govern the day/  
and the lesser one to govern the night:/  
and he made the stars.../  
God saw how good it was./
- Reader 6:** (6 slides):  
God said,/  
"Let the waters teem with living creatures,/  
and let birds fly above the earth within the vault of heaven./  
And so it was. And God saw that it was good./  
God blessed them saying, "Be fruitful, multiply and fill the waters of the  
seas./  
Let the birds multiply upon the earth."/
- Reader 7:** (6 slides):

Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth all kinds of living creatures;/  
cattle, creeping things and wild animals of all kinds."/  
And so it happened,/  
God made all of the wild animals,/  
all kinds of cattle, and all kinds creeping things of the earth./  
And God saw that it was good./

**Reader 8:** (6 slides):  
God said, "Let us make humans in the image and likeness of ourselves,/  
and let them be masters of the fish of the sea,/  
the birds of the heaven, the cattle/  
all the wild beasts and all the reptiles that crawl upon the earth./  
And so it was./  
And God saw that it was good./

**Leader:** The Word of the Lord.

**Response:** Thanks be to God.

(Brief pause to reflect on God's Word.)

**Leader:** We invite you to respond to God's word by joining in a reading of the Earth Day Pledge.

*(Put on an overhead transparency.)*

### **The Earth Day Pledge**

Recognizing that people's actions towards nature and each other are the source of growing damage to the environment and resources needed to meet human needs and to ensure survival and development.



I PLEDGE to act to the best of my ability to help make the Earth a secure and hospitable home for present and future generations.

### **Closing Prayer**

**Leader:** Let us pray ...  
Creator God, you have entrusted us with the care for the Earth. Help us to keep the promises we have just made so that not only we, but our children and our children's children can enjoy the precious gifts of your creation.  
We make this prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.

### **Closing Song: *Bless the Lord (Glory and Praise)***

Adapted from a prayer service prepared by Laurie Richardson, ALCDSB.

## Earth Day Celebration (2)

### Introduction

**Leader:** Welcome to our Earth Day Celebration. We come together to think about and thank God for our wondrous earth, and for the beautiful gifts of creation that we enjoy on our planet.

We only need to look around us to see the splendor of creation: the budding trees and sprouting flowers, the green grass and magnificent forests, the busy insects and mighty animals, the lofty mountain tops and gentle valleys, the nesting and singing birds, and the multitude of fish in our lakes and streams.

It is awesome to think that the crowning highlight of God's creation was people. God created us and fashioned us in His image.

We were created and made to be like Him. The earth is great and majestic. God made this beautiful world for us.

He made everything and everyone, that we might live together in harmony. May we be trustworthy and responsible keepers of the world.

Please join in our opening song ***All For the Glory of God*** (Jack Miffleton).

### Opening Prayer

**Leader:** Let us begin our prayer ...

**All:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Leader:** Gracious God, send your Spirit among us this day as we celebrate the precious gift that is the Earth.

May our hearts sing out with joy as we behold the wonder and beauty of your creation.

Help us to be responsible stewards of these your gifts, now and in the future.

We make this prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.

Please be seated as we listen to God's Word proclaimed to us.

**First Reading:** Genesis: 1: 1 - 31

*(Suggestion: Use multiple readers, and adapt and edit for your own purposes.)  
(Brief pause for silent reflection.)*

**Responsorial Psalm** (148 -paraphrase or adapt as you wish.)

**Response:** We praise You, God, and give you thanks.

*Further Readings: Any student poems or a short story about the beauty of creation might be shared at this time.*

**Slide Presentation:** *(Display the slides and set them to music... **Like a Tent** (Gr. 3 Revised Program, **Born in the Spirit**) might be suitable for this purpose. The students could sing the refrain of that song while individual narrators could say the three verses.*

**Prayers of Intercession:**

**Leader:** Let us present our prayers to place our petitions before our Creator God in song.  
Please join in singing **Song of the Earth**. (Gr. 2 Revised Program, **Born in the Spirit**)  
*(This song is presented in petitionary form, and may include liturgical movements to enhance the song.)*

**Gesture**

*Choose a sign that reflects our commitment to be stewards of the earth.  
(Symbolic actions may include planting trees, planting seeds, or shaking hands to show that together we will work to take care of the earth.)*

**Closing Prayer**

**Leader:** Lord, God, we rejoice that You are our Creator.

We thank You especially today, for the great wonders and gifts of creation.

May we be faithful to our call to be stewards of the earth.

Continue to bless us with Your love and care, as we live our lives in Your created world.

May we be people who bless the world by the healing power of our presence.

This we ask, through Jesus, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Let us join together in singing our closing song **All For the Glory**.

**Concluding Song: All For the Glory or He's Got the Whole World in His Hands.**  
(Jack Miffleton)



## Earth Day Celebration (3)

**Opening Song: *Song of the Earth*** (Gr. 2 Program, **Born in the Spirit** Series)

### Introduction

**Leader:** Today is really special!

We are here to celebrate the wonderful Earth that God has given us.

New flowers, new plants and new trees are beginning to grow!

The animals are beginning to come out, too!

God made all these beautiful things for us to enjoy.

He makes them new for us every year.

Let's enjoy these wonderful things today that God has made!

Let's pray for the continued beauty of our world.

### Opening Prayer

**Leader:** Let us begin our prayer ...

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O God, how great and beautiful is all of your creation - from the smallest insect to the largest mammal.

You, God, have created for us a most magnificent world.

We praise you and thank you for our universe.

We promise to take care of your world by making responsible choices that will allow its balance and beauty to continue.

We make this prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.

Please stand and join in singing our opening song, ***Like a Tent***. (Gr. 3 Revised Program, **Born in the Spirit**)

### Opening Song: *Like a Tent*

**Leader:** Please be seated as we listen to a reading.

**Reading:** Based on Genesis 1

**Reader:** God created the heavens and spread them out.

He gave shape to the earth and what comes from it.  
He gave breath to its people and life to the creatures that move in it.

### **Prayers of Petition**

**Response:** Lord, help us to treat your world with kindness.

- So we can show our love to all our brothers and sisters in the world, we pray to the Lord... **R.**
- So we can be kind and good to the animals You have given us to enjoy, we pray to the Lord... **R.**
- So we use the trees, plants and other things in Your world carefully, we pray to the Lord... **R.**

### **Earth Day Pledge**

**Leader:** Let us recite together our Earth Day Pledge ...

#### The Earth Day Pledge

Recognizing that people's actions towards nature and each other are the source of growing damage to the environment and resources needed to meet human needs and to ensure survival and development.

I PLEDGE to act to the best of my ability to help make the Earth a secure and hospitable home for present and future generations.

**Poem**        *The Seed*

**Reader:** In the heart of a seed buried deep so deep  
A dear little plant lay fast asleep.  
“Wake,” said the sun, “and creep to the light.”  
“Wake,” said the voice of the rain drops bright.  
The little plant woke and rose to see  
What a wonderful world outside might be.  
It lifted its face up to the sky  
And said, “What a happy little plant am I!”

### **Hand Ceremony**

**Leader:** Turn to the person next to you.

Make a cross in the palms of this person's hands.

Say: “I bless your hands in God's name.

May you use your hands to care for our world with love.  
Amen.”

**Concluding Prayer**

**Leader:** Let us pray...

God, our Creator, we ask you in a special way today to teach us how to love and preserve our Mother Earth.

This is one of your greatest gifts to us.

May we offer the earth only love and peace.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, your Son, and our Lord. Amen.

**Leader:** Let us stand and join together and sing our closing song.

**Song:** **He’s Got the Whole World** (Jack Miffleton)



## **We Are God's Special Creation**

### **Welcome**

**Presider:** We are created in the image of God;

God shares his life with us; God loves us.

We are able to love, to think, to feel, to choose, to act, to learn, to play, to pray and much more because we are made in God's image.

### **Opening Prayer**

**Presider:** Together, let us begin our prayer ...

**All:** In the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Presider:** Let us pray...

God of goodness and beauty, you made this beautiful world, filled it with life, and you leave it to us to care for it.

Help us to work with you to build a beautiful world, so that your kingdom will come and your will be done on this earth.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

**All:** Amen.

**Proclamation of the Word:** A reading from the book of Genesis (1 and 2)

**Reader:** God is the beginning of all things. God made the heavens and the earth. The earth was empty and dark, with water everywhere. Then God said, "Let there be light." And there was! There was evening and morning. This was the first day. Next God put a wide space above the water. God called the space sky. This was the second day. On the third day, God gathered the water into its own places. Now there were seas and dry ground. "Let plants grow in the ground," God said. And they did! Then God said, "Let there be lights in the sky for the day and for night." God made the sun, the moon, and the stars. This was the fourth day. On the fifth day, God made fish for the seas. He made birds for the sky. On the sixth day, God made living things for the land. Then God said, "Let us make human beings. Let them rule over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and the living things on land." God made the first human being from the dust. The first man was called Adam. God breathed into Adam the breath of life. God looked at all he had made. It was very good! On the seventh day, God rested. He made that day a holy day.  
The Word of the Lord.

**All:** Thanks be to God.

**Response to God's Word: A Shared Reflection**

**Reader:** Oh God, our God  
How wonderful you are.  
We look at the sky  
Where the stars are laid  
And the moon so bright  
Which your hands have made

**All:** We thank You!

**Reader:** There are mothers and fathers  
And little kids too  
You care for us all  
And have made us like you



**All:** We thank You!

**Reader:** You gave us this world  
To handle with care,  
With the fish of the sea  
And the birds of the air

**All:** We thank You!

**Reader:** There are horses and cows  
They neigh and they moo;  
We think they are joining  
Our thank you to You!

**All:** We thank You!

**Ritual Action:** *Something special God has created is ...*

**Presider:** Let us go around our circle/class and give each one of you a chance to the sentence and tell us about something that God has made. Let us begin with (name) ...

*(Each child will say the sentence and tell us something God has made.)*

### **Closing Prayer**

**Presider:** God of all life,  
we give you thanks for the signs  
of your love that surround us:  
for sun and warmth  
and all that comes to life within creation;  
for all that sleeps within the earth  
awaiting birth.  
Reach out to us,  
with compassion and forgiveness,  
that knowing ourselves to be loved and graced,  
we might work to bring about your Reign. Amen.

Let us sing together our closing song.

**Closing Song: *God's World*** (from Grade 1 religion program)  
Adapted from a prayer service written by Kim Coulter, ALCDSB

Prayer on a Spring Day

Father,  
thank you for making  
the whole world  
come alive again  
after the long winter.

Thank you for the joy  
I felt today  
when I saw flowers  
about to open.  
Each blue and white and yellow  
and red flower  
is a gift from you.

Thank you for showing  
your love  
through the beautiful things  
you have made.  
Amen.



## **Peace with Nature: Meditations for the Young**

By: Sophie Jakowski

We were not here when the Lord made the universe out of nothing and when He made the Planet Earth.

He made the light, the air, the water and the land, with minerals and other hidden treasures.

He made the plants and the animals, all sorts of living things, all beautiful and interesting.

When there were no people on this earth the air, the waters, the soil, were clean and healthy for all the living beings to share.

All the living creatures and all forms of matter the Lord made gave glory to the Lord just by being what they were.

God created human beings in His image to be witnesses of His love. He wanted us to be happy and He wanted us to be free: to use of free will participating in His Divine Plan, lovingly caring for His creation, common inheritance for all people of all times.

People came into a world of clean air, waters and soil, full of different forms of plants and animals to live among them and with them as a very special form of life.

The Lord gave us intelligence and skills and ways to know right from wrong. God gave us the task to care for the Earth and to make it more useful and helpful to each person and to society through science and technology, so that we could all live in peace.

When there were no people on the Earth there were no wars. Plants and animals followed the laws of the Lord serving one another in their life and in their death.

But people did not recognize that they were placed on the Earth to care for the heritage of God who made everything out of nothing.

People made wars on nature and they made wars among themselves. And now we have an environmental crisis: air and water pollution, massive deforestation, fertile lands turned into deserts, important plants and animals in danger of disappearing forever, disasters caused by human errors.

The living beings that occupied the Earth before we came did not cause all this damage. Many of them did not survive and others are in serious danger of extinction because people are constantly at war with nature and what we need is to be at peace.

War with nature is a war we cannot survive. We must do everything we can to stop it. Science and technology must not destroy nature. Knowledge must be used to save nature and to restore it. Forests, soils, waters, the fauna all are necessary. They must

be used wisely to permit their renewal. We cannot use them without considering the future. Future generations, after us, will depend on what is left.

We have duties towards God and towards each other. We also have serious obligations towards nature. Our life depends on it and we owe nature a great debt.

Let us contemplate nature undisturbed and at peace: the skies and the mountains, the sea and the rivers, the fields and the forests.

He also gave us His grace to do this with joy: to restore the Earth so that we may live in peace with Mother Nature.



## Prayer for our Planet Earth

Unfortunately everything is not right on our planet: every day, on television, we hear about pollution, famine, war, unemployment and crime. There are millions of refugees who have no country, no homes, no bread and no hope. There are people who are too rich and don't share. There are people who are too poor and have nothing. When we see all that is wrong in our world, we should ask God to help us change our hearts and change our world.

God our Father,  
You have entrusted the earth  
to our care,  
and bid us share its riches.  
Give us the courage to make the efforts and necessary sacrifices  
to accomplish Your will.  
We ask this  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Holy Spirit,  
it is You who changes our Hearts and enables us to love.  
Please change the hearts  
of all those who want war,  
who want to take away from others their freedom or their bread.  
Strengthen those who suffer in their fight against oppression.  
Rekindle in the hearts of all people the longing for peace and justice,  
and the courage to build them. Amen.



## In Praise of Spring

God of all seasons,  
with artistic splendor  
you have given us an overture  
to the resurrection of your Son  
in the resurrection of spring  
from the cold tomb of winter.

With joy, we greet  
the coming of flowers  
and the return of birds,  
as we enthusiastically celebrate  
the feast of the resurrection of Christ.

Make us one  
with all creation  
that sings the song of springtime.

With gratitude, we accept  
the graces of this day:  
for relationships begun and renewed;  
for moments of encouragement and affirmation;  
for issues raised and challenges posed;  
for journeys begun and continued.

In hope, we go forth from this place,  
strengthened in our commitment to Catholic education  
and certain of the inspiration of your Spirit.

May the Lord bless us and keep us;  
The Lord make his face to shine upon us,  
and be gracious to us;  
The Lord lift up his countenance upon us,  
and give us peace.

Amen.

## An Earth Day Celebration During Lent



### Opening Prayer

**Leader:** Let us begin our prayer together ...

**All:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Leader:** We gather to celebrate the gift of the earth in spring.

Rivers flow, fruit trees flower, seeds sprout green.

Make us aware, Lord, of the grandeur of all creation and give us feet to walk humbly and hands to touch gently this garden earth.

The gifts of God's garden earth be with each of you.

**All:** And also with you.

**Reader 1:** The Lord planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there put the man God had formed. God made all kinds of beautiful trees.

In the middle of the garden stood the tree that gives life. A stream flowed in Eden and watered the garden; and beyond Eden divided into four rivers.

Then the Lord God placed the man in the garden to cultivate and guard it.

Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for you to live alone. I will make you a suitable companion to help you." (Genesis 2:8-19)

The Word of the Lord.

**All:** Thanks be to God.

**Leader:** We know of God's presence as creator in our garden earth. Before our creation banner, we light this candle.

May its flame warm the earth and each of our hearts.

May this burning candle be a sign of God's presence with us always.

As the earth is a gift, so we, created in the image and likeness of God, we, too, are a gift.

We are gardeners of the earth, caretakers of the land. We cultivate and preserve; we guard and protect.

## Rite of Water

**Leader:** Water is a sign of new life. A stream of life waters our garden and then flows into four rivers carrying God's life to the earth: north, south, east, and west. It is this same stream that gives drink to the city of God.

**Reader 2:** The river of the water of life, sparkling like crystal, flows down the middle of the city's street. On either side of the river is the tree of life, which bears fruit twelve times a year, once each month and its leaves are for the healing of the nations." (Revelations 22:1-2)

**Reader 3:** We are like trees that grow beside a stream and bear fruit at the right time and whose leaves do not dry up.

**Reader 4:** A healthy tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a poor tree bear good fruit. Every tree is known by the fruit it bears; you do not pick figs from thorn bushes or gather grapes from bramble bushes. A good person brings good out of the treasure of good things in her heart." (Luke 5: 43-45)

**Leader:** We come to our water to bless ourselves for the good fruit we will bear to others through all the months of the year.

*Each participant dips a finger into the water and blesses themselves, making a sign of the cross.*

## Closing Prayer

**Reader 5:** Lord God, you are the light of our spring, the life of our garden earth, the living water that nourishes.  
Soon we will celebrate your Son's Paschal mystery of living, dying, and rising.  
At Easter, inspire gardeners of the earth to join voices and hearts as we proclaim, "Jesus is our risen Lord! Alleluia!"  
Bless this garden earth to receive the risen Lord.  
In joy and gladness, we say yes to the season of spring as we celebrate this festival of our garden earth.  
We make this prayer in the name of Jesus, our brother and risen Lord.  
Amen.



A General Outline for an Earth Day Prayer Service ...

## ***In Praise of Creation During the Easter Season***

**Introduction** (*The presider offers a brief explanation of the theme of Earth Day*)

### **Gathering Song**

*(This may be accompanied by a procession using signs from nature, posters, plants etc. - see "Procession of Symbols" see 3.15 p. 27 — this could also be used at another point in the liturgy e.g. as a response to the first reading, following the prayers of intercession)*

### **Opening Prayer**

**Presider:** Let us begin by saying together...

**All:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Presider:** Let us pray with special joy during this season of Easter...

God, our creator and creator of the entire universe, we have gathered here today (on this Earth Day) as a grateful and humble people; grateful for the gift of creation and humbled by the sheer grandeur of the cosmos.

Send us your Spirit that, with hearts stilled, we might become more inspired by the beauty and mysteries that surround us every day and become more accepting of your call for us to be your faithful caretakers of the earth.

We make our prayer in the name of Jesus, our brother, who delighted in wandering the beautiful hills of Galilee.

**All:** Amen.

**Presider:** Let us listen to God's Word proclaimed to us.

### **Reading**

**Reader:** A reading from the book of Genesis (1-2:5)

The word of the Lord.

**All:** Thanks be to God.

### **Response to God's Word:**

*There are many Psalms that praise creation (e.g. Psalms 104, 136, 148). They can be reworked to include a suitable responsorial refrain.*

OR

*Use one of the prayers included in this resource in a choral fashion or involve several readers — A Prayer of Gratitude, A Prayer of Healing, Litany of the Earth.*

## Prayers of Intercession

**Presider:** Let us offer in faith these prayers of intercession to our God, for the good of the Church, of all people and for all of creation.  
The response to each prayer will be, "Lord, hear our prayer."

OR

*The students can compose their own responses.*

*Prayers of intercession begin with a prayer for the Church, then world leaders, etc. moving from the general to the particular.*

## Symbolic Gesture

*Again, lots of options here — you could plant seeds, or you could recite the Environmentalists Creed together.*

## Closing Prayer

**Presider:** Let us pray...

*You could select one from the attached (e.g. Native American Prayer, etc.) or write your own.*

## Final Blessing

**Presider:** Let us pray for God's blessing...

May God, our creator, bless us + (all make sign of the cross together), continue to give life to the earth and inspire us to reverence all of creation as a sacred gift to be passed on to our own children and grandchildren.

We make this prayer in the name of Jesus, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Let us go from here with an increased commitment to the earth.

**All:** Thanks be to God!



## A Prayer of Gratitude

**We rejoice in all life!**

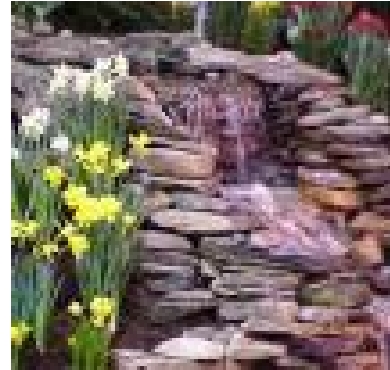
We live in all things  
All things live in us.

**We rejoice in all life!**

We live by the sun  
We move with the stars.

**We rejoice in all life!**

We eat from the earth  
We drink from the rain  
We breathe from the air



**We rejoice in all life!**

We share with the creatures  
We have strength through their gifts.

**We rejoice in all life!**

We depend on the forests  
We have knowledge through their secrets.

**We rejoice in all life!**

We have the privilege of seeing and understanding  
We have the responsibility of caring  
We have the joy of celebrating.

**We rejoice in all life!**

We are full of the grace of creation  
We are graceful  
We are grateful  
We rejoice in all life.

**We rejoice in all life!**

Adapted from a prayer from Hildegard of Bingen

## **A Prayer of Healing**

**We join with the earth and with each other.**

To bring new life to the land  
To restore the waters  
To refresh the air.

**We join with the earth and with each other.**

To renew the forests  
To care for the plants  
To protect the creatures.

**We join with the earth and with each other.**

To celebrate the seas  
To rejoice in the sunlight  
To sing the song of the stars.

**We join with the earth and with each other.**

To recall our destiny  
To renew our spirits  
To reinvigorate our bodies.

**We join with the earth and with each other.**

To create the human community  
To promote justice and peace  
To remember our children.

**We join together as many and diverse expressions of one loving mystery:  
for the healing of the earth and the renewal of all life.**



## **Litany of the Earth**

Together, let us acknowledge how we have failed God, each other and, indeed, the earth.

### **Lord, teach me to be a more faithful steward.**

Creator God, you breathed into us the breath of life and sustain us in our fragile atmosphere; for our failure to keep our air pure and our atmosphere intact, we ask your forgiveness and pray...

### **Lord, teach me to be a more faithful steward.**

Creator God, you formed us out of the soil and you sustain us with food that the earth continues to bring forth; for our failure to treat our soil with respect and free from harmful substances, we ask your forgiveness and pray...

### **Lord, teach me to be a more faithful steward.**

Creator God, you cleanse and refresh us with life-giving waters, waters that sustain countless plant and animal species; for our failure to respect the oceans, lakes, rivers and streams, we ask your forgiveness and pray...

### **Lord, teach me to be a more faithful steward.**

Creator God, you filled the seas, the skies and the dry land with a myriad of living creatures, from the smallest of microbes to the awesome display pods of whales, flocks of birds and herds of animals; for our failure to protect all forms of life, we ask your forgiveness and pray...

### **Lord, teach me to be a more faithful steward.**

Creator God, our planet has brought forth countless varieties of vegetation and plants of all colours, shapes and sizes, many of which, through our neglect and selfishness, have disappeared from the face of the earth, for our failure to realize our proper place in your complex scheme of life, we ask your forgiveness and pray...

### **Lord, teach me to be a more faithful steward.**

Creator God, through your gift of reason, our ingenuity has brought forth technologies that have allowed us to explore from the depths of the oceans to the vastness of outer space; for the times that we have used our machines to assault, rather than care for, our planet, we ask your forgiveness and pray...

### **Lord, teach me to be a more faithful steward.**

Providential God, you have placed humanity in a very special place in your web of life. May we come to realize in our hearts as well as in our heads that we also stand with creation and never outside of it. May we acquire the wisdom to acknowledge our failures and the courage to make the necessary changes to our lifestyles to preserve your gift of creation for our children, our grandchildren and for all future generations. We ask these mercies from you, good and compassionate God, in the name of Jesus, your Son.

Amen.

## A Procession of Symbols

Creator God, Lord of all that has ever existed, exists and will come into being, from the pain of our suffering mother earth, we unite our voices that, together, we might all come to share your divine love for the universe.

### 1. Seeds

In these seeds lies the mystery of new life.

In our care for them may we come to reflect more clearly you who are the source of all life, we pray to you, Lord.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

### 2. Water

In this water lies the basic ingredient and sustainer of all that is living;

In our care for our planet's waters, may we come to acknowledge more deeply your presence which is the guarantor of all that exists, we pray to you, Lord.

**Response: Lord, hear our prayer.**

### 3. Earth

From this soil we derive the building blocks of our civilizations, the source of food and precious minerals from which we rely for energy and building materials.

In our care for the soil, may we come to realize that all of our activities, if apart from you, are futile and without ultimate meaning, we pray to you, Lord.

**Response: Lord, hear our prayer.**

### 4. Air (represented by moving streamers, pinwheels)

From this air that surrounds us we draw our lives,

Yet in its abundance it is so easy to take for granted.

In our care for the air, may we come to recognize your loving arms that embrace every moment of our lives, we pray to you, Lord.

**Response: Lord, hear our prayer.**

### 5. Plants and Animals (represented by posters, costumed students)

In the variety of living creatures we learn of the complexity of the web of life on our planet.

In our care for all species of plant and animal life we see your miraculous power of love that keeps everything in existence.

May we come to root our relationships with all of creation in that love, we pray to you, Lord.

**Response: Lord, hear our prayer.**

Hear our prayer, loving God, that we might all become better stewards of your creation and our home. We make this prayer in the name of Jesus, your Son whose parables often spoke of the earth, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, who hovered over the waters at the moment of creation, one God, forever and ever.

Amen.



## Native American Prayer

O Great Spirit,  
Whose breadth gives life to the world  
and whose voice is heard in the soft breeze:  
We need your strength and wisdom.

May we walk in beauty. May our eyes  
ever behold the red and purple sunset.

Make us wise so that we may understand  
what you have taught us.

Help us learn the lessons you have hidden  
In every leaf and rock.

Make us always ready to come to you  
with clean hands and straight eyes  
So when life fades, as the fading sunset  
our spirits may come to you without shame.





## **An Environmentalist's Creed**

I believe in God, the Creator of the universe and all that it contains.  
I believe that God is love and that that love is evident in all created things.  
I believe that everything exists for a purpose.  
I believe that we can learn of this purpose only after we acknowledge the cosmic harmony of the universe.  
I believe that in God's son, Jesus, is revealed the ultimate purpose of humanity's existence - to experience God's love to the fullest and to share that love with all of Creation.  
I believe that all of my efforts to love are tied mystically to all of Creation; That when any created thing is reduced from being all that it can be in the larger scheme of things, it reduces my capacity to become all that I might become.  
I believe that I have been called in a special way to care for my planet.  
I believe that God's Spirit can be experienced in all of Creation.  
I believe that the Church is called to be a steward not just of souls but of every created thing.  
I believe that Jesus' resurrection points to the transformation of Creation itself.  
I believe that, with God's love, the effects of sin can be overcome in my life and in the life of the world.  
I look forward to the renewal of every created thing at the end of time.  
Amen.



## Earth Week Celebration

**Greeting:** God made a wonderful world for us to use and to enjoy.  
We must take care of this world. Today we will celebrate  
God's goodness and say thanks to God for all of Creation.

**Opening Prayer:** Thank you God for bringing us all together to praise you.

**Reading:** Adaptation for young children of the Creation story

Once there was no world, and everywhere there was darkness. God said, "Let there be light." God made the sun to shine during the day, and the moon and stars to shine at night. (First child places a cut-out sun on the flannel board)

Then God made the land and the water (Second child places a cut-out pond on the board.)

God looked at the light, the land, and the water and said, "This is good."

Next, God made plants to grow on the land. (Third child places a cut-out tree on the board; fourth child a cut-out flower.)

And God put clouds in the sky to hold the rain. (Fifth child places a cut-out cloud on board.)

Then God said, "Let there be birds to fly in the sky." (Sixth child places a cut-out bird on the board.) "And let there be many kinds of fish to swim in the water." (Seventh child placed a cut-out fish on the pond.)

God said, "There should also be many kinds of animals to live in my beautiful world." (Eighth and ninth children place cut-put animals on the boards.)

Then God said, "Now I will make some very special friends. I will make people." (Tenth child places boy and girl cut-outs on the board.)

God told the people to take care of all the beautiful things – the flowers, the trees, the fish, the birds, the animals, and especially each other. God liked everything.

(Based on Genesis 1:1-31)

### Reflection

**Response:** Your world is wonderful, wonderful God.

Reader: God has made light to shine in the sky. (R)

Reader: God made the land and the water. (R)

Reader: God made plants that grow on the land. (R)

Reader: God made fish that swim in the water. (R)

Reader: God made many kinds of animals. (R)

Reader: God made you and God made me. (R)

Reader: Please join in making an Earth Day promise (display on a transparency)

The Earth is my home

I promise to keep it healthy and beautiful.

I will love the land, the air, the water and all living creatures.

I will be a defender of my planet.

United with friends, I will save the Earth.

Amen.



## An Earth Day Prayer Celebration

### Décor

- Appropriate symbols of the earth and its inhabitants hung on the walls.
- A table with the elements of the earth displayed.
- Children can add symbols of creation (sky, earth, water, animals, plants etc.) to a mural as the creation story is being read.

### Introduction

**Presider:** Each year during the month of April, we celebrate Earth Day.

God calls us to take care of the Earth. We must respect and care for our environment.

Through population pressures and over-consumption, we are destroying the earth's life-systems.

We ask God to help us overcome our greed and indifference so that we can make and protect a healthy eco-system where all living creatures can flourish.

We have gathered today to praise and bless God for creation.

Earth, the planet on which we live is God's gift to us.

The heavens the region surrounding Earth, including the clouds, the sky, the sun, moon, and stars are also great gifts.

### Opening Prayer

**Presider:** Let us pray.....

Creator of all that is,

**Reader 1:** We join with the Earth and with each other; empower us  
To bring new life to the land  
To restore the waters  
To refresh the air

**Reader 2:** We join with the Earth and with each other; strengthen us:  
To renew the forests  
To care for the plants  
To protect the creatures

**Reader 3:** We join with the Earth and with each other; encourage us:  
To celebrate the seas  
To rejoice in the sunlight



To sing the song of the stars

**Reader 4:** We join with the Earth and with each other; help us:  
To recreate the human community  
To promote justice and peace  
To remember our children

**Presider:** We join together as many and diverse expressions of one loving mystery:  
for the healing of the Earth and the renewal of all life. We make this prayer  
in Jesus' name.

**All:** Amen.

*—adapted from U.N. Environmental Sabbath Program  
quoted in Prayers for Healing edited by Maggie Oman*

### **A Reading adapted from Genesis**

**Reader:** In the beginning, God created the universe. God said: "Let there be Light" and light appeared. Then he separated the light from the darkness and he named the light "Day" and the darkness "Night." God then commanded: "Let there be a dome to separate the water from the air. He named the dome "Sky." God then created land. He called this Earth. He said: "Let the earth produce all kinds of plants and trees that will bear grain and fruit. God then created the sun, moon and stars to light the day and night. He filled the oceans with many kinds of living things and the air with birds. God then said: "Let the Earth produce all kinds of animal life. Finally, God said, "Now I will make human beings. They will be in my image and they will have power over the birds, fish, animals and plants. God said, "I am putting you in charge of the Earth. God was pleased with His creation.  
The word of the Lord...

**All:** Thanks be to God.

### **Reflection**

*(Play a selection of music while students read the poem.)*

### **The Earth is My Mother**

**Reader 1:** The earth is my mother, my sister and my brother  
The earth grows the food that I love  
I've got to protect it, remember to respect it  
Together with the sun above  
*(pause)*

**Reader 2:** Let's put a smile on the earth  
A hug for all it's worth  
Let's clean up the water and air  
Pick up in the school year  
You know it can't be too hard  
to tell her that we really care.  
*(pause)*

**Reader 3:** Let's plant a tree  
It's fun for you and me  
We're growing a future you know  
Please recycle paper  
share it with your neighbour  
and show the earth we love her so.

### **Responsorial Psalm (Based on Psalm 104)**

*(Have students hold up a banner with the response.)*

**Reader 1:** You have made the earth, and it can never be moved.

**All:** Help us to respect all life.

**Reader 2:** You send rain from the sky, and the whole earth is filled with your blessings.

**All:** Help us to respect all life.

**Reader 1:** You make grass grow for cattle and plants for people to eat.

**All:** Help us to respect all life.

**Reader 2:** The trees of God get plenty of rain. There the birds can build their nests.

**All:** Help us to respect all life.

**Reader 1:** You made the moon to mark the months. The sun knows what time to rise and set.

**All:** Help us to respect all life.

**Reader 2:** You made the light and the darkness.

**All:** Help us to respect all life.

**Reader 1:** All of the creatures depend on you to give them food when they need it.

**All:** Help us to respect all life.

**Reader 2:** O God, you have made so many things! How wisely you made them all!  
The earth is filled with your creatures.

**All:** Help us to respect all life.

### **Closing Prayer**

**Presider:** I invite you to join me in making a pledge to the Earth.

**All:** The Earth is my home.  
I promise to keep it  
healthy and beautiful.  
I will love the land, the air,  
the water and all living creatures.  
I will be a defender of my planet.  
United with friends and God,  
I will save the Earth.

### **Kids for saving Earth promise**

*(Pause.)*

**Presider:** Let us pray our closing prayer together ...

**All:** Heavenly Father, loving creator,  
We thank you for all your gifts.  
Thank you for the sky and clouds,  
for waterways and deserts,  
For mountains and valleys,  
For the moon and the stars.  
Thank you for the gift of Earth.

We make this prayer in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

A prayer service prepared by Nynke Hoedeman (ALCDSB).



## Earth Day Novena



Dear Sisters and Associates,

On behalf of the New Jersey Mercy Justice Circle, we created this Earth Day novena as a gift for you. We hope that it will be a heart- and consciousness-raising aid for praising God in all creation. Our hope is that each day's reflection will be a seed of contemplation. Perhaps, at some time during the day, as you wait on line or perform a chore, you will ponder these words and, through this pondering, see and touch God in the world of splendor that is surrounding you at that very moment. What is God saying to you? How should you respond? All thought, all creation, speaks of God's glory and providence.

As we are called to see ourselves and each other as earthen vessels that hold God's presence and bring God's gifts to the world, so, too, this very world and all that is above, around and within it are Earthen Vessels - just as easily shattered, just as much in need of our loving attentiveness and support. May our hands align with God's in caressing and shaping these.

Together we proclaim:

We, and all creation are God's earthen vessels.

Help us, O Lord to live and act in harmony and interdependence with all creation.

(from Direction Statement, Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas) Earth Focus Group New Jersey Mercy Justice Circle

### ***Day One: Monday, April 17, 2006***

Let us pray today for: trees, plants, crops, and forests.

"... the seed sown on rich soil is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields a hundred or sixty or thirty fold." Matthew 13: 23

Creator God, we thank you for your gifts of trees, plants, crops, and forests. We repent the abuse we have given to these your creations. And we now ask for your guidance in restoring the face of the earth.

"O, my merciful Savior, you know my weakness. Vouchsafe to assist me with your powerful grace." Catherine McAuley

### ***Day Two: Tuesday, April 18, 2006***

Let us pray today for: water, oceans, rivers, streams, and ponds.

"Wherever the river flows, every sort of living creature that can multiply will live, and there will be abundant fish, for wherever this water comes, the sea will be made fresh. Everything will live wherever the river flows." Ezekiel 47: 9

Creator God, we thank you for your gifts of water, oceans, rivers, streams, and ponds. We repent the abuse we have given to these your creations. And we now ask for your guidance in restoring the face of the earth.

"O, my merciful Savior, you know my weakness. Vouchsafe to assist me with your powerful grace." C. McAuley

***Day Three: Wednesday, April 19, 2006***

Let us pray today for: air, wind, climate, and weather.

"When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were...And they were all filled with the holy Spirit..." Acts 2: 1-2, 4

Creator God, we thank you for your gifts of air, wind, climate, and weather. We repent the abuse we have given to these your creations. And we now ask for your guidance in restoring the face of the earth.

"O, my merciful Savior, you know my weakness. Vouchsafe to assist me with your powerful grace." Catherine McAuley

***Day Four: Thursday, April 20, 2006***

Let us pray today for: sun, clean energy, and prevention of global warming.

"O radiant dawn, shine forth in glory! Christ has burst forth from the tomb. Give praise, O peoples of the earth. Death is overcome, God triumphs. Alleluia!"

Morning and Evening Prayer of the Sisters of Mercy Creator God, we thank you for your gift of the sun. We repent the abuse we have given to this your creation. And we now ask for your guidance in restoring the face of the earth.

"O, my merciful Savior, you know my weakness. Vouchsafe to assist me with your powerful grace." Catherine McAuley

***Day Five: Friday, April 21, 2006***

Let us pray today for: animals, especially endangered species.

"Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea creatures, you wild beasts and all tame animals, you creeping things and you winged fowl. Praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted; His majesty is above earth and heaven..." Psalm 148: 7, 10, 13  
Creator God, we thank you for your gift of all the varied species of animals. We repent the abuse we have given to these your creations. And we now ask for your guidance in restoring the face of the earth.

"O, my merciful Savior, you know my weakness. Vouchsafe to assist me with your powerful grace." C. McAuley

***Day Six: Saturday, April 22, 2006***

Let us pray today for: humankind.

"I will make you a new heart, breathe new spirit into you. I will remove your heart of stone, give you back a heart of flesh. I will give you my own spirit, to lead you in my ways, faithful to what I command." Ezekiel 36: 26-27

Creator God, we thank you for your gift of life. May we always remember our roles as stewards of your creation and sisters and brothers to each other. We repent the sins we have committed against all of your creations. And we now ask for your guidance in restoring the face of the earth.

"O, my merciful Savior, you know my weakness. Vouchsafe to assist me with your powerful grace." Catherine McAuley

***Day Seven: Sunday, April 23, 2006***

Let us pray today for: recycling and moderate personal consumption.

"Jesus said to them, 'There is no reason for them to go away; give them some food yourselves.' ...Taking five loaves and two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he said the blessing, broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, who in turn gave them to the crowds. They all ate and were satisfied..." Matthew 14: 16, 19-20

Creator God, we thank you for the abundance of resources with which we are blessed. We repent the abuse and oversuse of these gifts. And we now ask for your guidance in restoring the face of the earth.

"O, my merciful Savior, you know my weakness. Vouchsafe to assist me with your powerful grace." Catherine McAuley

***Day Eight: Monday, April 24, 2006***

Let us pray today for: proper use of chemicals and disposal of toxic waste.

"The wrath of God is indeed being revealed from heaven against every impiety and wickedness" Romans 1: 18

Creator God, we thank you for your gift of chemicals which improve our lives. We repent our abuse of them and our improper disposal of toxic waste, which pollutes our earth and your creations. And we now ask for your guidance in restoring the face of the earth.

"O, my merciful Savior, you know my weakness. Vouchsafe to assist me with your powerful grace." C. McAuley

***Day Nine: Tuesday, April 25, 2006***

Let us pray today for: Earth and unity.

"Let us seek to know the Lord, whose coming is sure as dawn, who descends like the rain, spring rain renewing the earth." Hosea 6: 3

Creator God, we thank you for creating such a wondrous and magnificent home for us. We repent all our sins against creation. And we now ask for your guidance in restoring the face of the earth.

"O, my merciful Savior, you know my weakness. Vouchsafe to assist me with your powerful grace." Catherine McAuley

**Concluding Prayer:**

"God has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" Micah 6: 8

Creator God, we thank you for all of creation. We ask your forgiveness where we have failed to be just stewards. And we now ask for your guidance in restoring the face of the earth. May we learn to live in harmony, safety, and just sharing of resources among all so that we achieve the kingdom of God.

"We should be as shining lamps, giving light to all around us." Catherine McAuley

**Blessing:**

Peace be to this community. Amen.

Peace be to this land. Amen.

Peace be to this people. Amen.

## Ecology Quotations and Prayers

from Scarboro Missions Calendar Issue: Ecology, Volume 89, Number 4, September-October 2008

We belong beautifully to the earth and ultimately to the cosmic web of life. Daily we breathe in the odor of sanctity that imbues creation. Our God walks with us in the garden of life, the Originating and Sustaining Mystery who is radically transparent for those who have eyes to see.

Diarmuid O'Murchu, "Evolutionary Faith: Rediscovering God in Our Great Story". Orbis Books, 2002

The entire cosmos is born of God, as is each and every creature. We depend on this source of life and its renewal absolutely. We could not live a moment without the gifts of God's body – air, food, water, land, and other creatures. This realization ... calls forth awe and immense gratitude.

Sallie McFague, "A New Climate for Theology – God, the World and Global Warming". Fortress Press, 2008

Let the heaven be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it; let the field exult, and everything in it. Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy before the Lord.

Psalm 96: 11-13

Apprehend God in all things, for God is in all things. Every single creature is full of God and is a book about God. Every creature is a word of God.

Meister Eckhart, Dominican, German theologian, philosopher, mystic

"Meditations with Meister Eckhart" by Matthew Fox, Rochester, VT, 05767  
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In our way of life, in our government, with every decision we make, we always keep in mind the Seventh Generation to come... When we walk upon Mother Earth we always plant our feet carefully because we know the faces of our future generations are looking up at us from beneath the ground. We never forget them.

Oren Lyons, Faithkeeper of the Turtle Clan of the Onondaga Nation  
and spokesperson for the Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy

Today, the dramatic threat of ecological breakdown is teaching us the extent to which greed and selfishness – both individual and collective – are contrary to the order of creation, an order which is characterized by mutual interdependence.

Pope John Paul II, World Day of Peace Message, 1990

Our destructiveness can silence creation's song of praise to God, our care for creation can be a true expression of our own praise.

Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, "The Call of Creation", 2002

Self-limitation, sacrifice, asceticism, simplification: all of this language so typical of many religious traditions means nothing more than making space so others can be, can live... Can we empty ourselves of the self so that the other – the transcendent in the body of a hungry person or a clear-cut forest or an endangered species – might have room?

Sallie McFague, "A New Climate for Theology – God, the World and Global Warming". Fortress Press, 2008

Creator God, whose Spirit moved over the face of the waters... we praise you for the gift of water. Create in us such a sense of wonder and delight in this and all your gifts, that we might receive them with gratitude, care for them with love, and generously share them with all your creatures, to the honour and glory of your holy name.

Our Sister Water, Franciscans International

We are also called to creative actions of solidarity with those who have less access to the benefits of God's bountiful creation. The 'Lover of Life', who came so that we all might have life, and have it abundantly, continues to provide us with opportunities to renew the face of the earth.

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, "You love all that exists... all things are Yours, God, lover of life", 2003

God showed me in my palm a little thing round as a ball, about the size of a hazelnut. I looked at it with the eye of my understanding and asked myself: 'What is this thing?' And I was answered: 'It is everything that is created.' I wondered how it could survive since it seemed so little it could suddenly disintegrate into nothing. The answer came: 'It endures and ever will endure, because God loves it.'

Julian of Norwich, 14<sup>th</sup> century mystic

Meditations with Julian of Norwich", by Brendan Doyle, Rochester, VT, 05767  
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From [www.appleseeds.org](http://www.appleseeds.org)

### **Earth Day Prayer:**

**O GOD**, we thank you for this earth, our home; for the wide sky and the blessed sun, for the ocean and streams, for the towering hills and the whispering wind, for the trees and green grass.

We thank you for our senses by which we hear the songs of birds, and see the splendor of fields of golden wheat, and taste autumn's fruit, and rejoice in the feel of snow, and smell the breath of spring flowers.

**GRANT US** a heart opened wide to all this beauty; and save us from being so blind that we pass unseeing when even the common thornbush is aflame with your glory. Amen.

### **Dawn of New Beginnings:**

**O God**, we thank you for this earth, our home; for the wide sky and the blessed sun, for the ocean and streams, for the towering hills and the whispering wind, for the trees and green grass.

**We** thank you for our senses by which we hear the songs of birds, and see the splendor of fields of golden wheat, and taste autumn's fruit, rejoice in the feel of snow, and smell the breath of spring flowers.

**Grant us** a heart opened wide to all this beauty; and save us from being so blind that we pass unseeing when even the common thornbush is aflame with your glory.

**For** each new dawn is filled with infinite possibilities for new beginnings and new discoveries. Life is constantly changing and renewing itself. In this new day of new beginnings with God, all things are possible. We are restored and renewed in a joyous awakening to the wonder that our lives are and, yet, can be. **Amen.**

### **A Summer Prayer**

Long warm days...

The pace of life slows...

A time for picnics and rest in the shade...

Lord,

help me to rest awhile in the cooling shade of your presence.

Slow down my restless heart and fill me with gentle compassion for all your people.

Amen.

## God and Creation

Charles Haddon Spurgeon wrote many years ago:

"There is no place where God is not. God is there in a thousand wonders, upholding rocky barriers, filling the buttercups with their perfume and refreshing the lonely pines with the breath of his mouth. Descend...into the lowest depths of the ocean, where undisturbed water sleeps, and the very sand is motionless in unbroken quiet, but the glory of the Lord is there, revealing its excellence in the silent palace of the sea. Borrow the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost parts of the sea, but God is there."

His beauty is stamped in all of creation:  
The glory of God can be seen  
from the smallest raindrop  
to the mighty flash of lightning;  
from the tiny rosebud  
to the huge magnolia blossom;  
from the rich, fertile soil of the Mississippi Delta  
to the arid, dusty land of the desert.  
We can see His stamp of glory in all the world,  
from the music of a sparkling brook  
to the majestic tumbling waterfall;  
from the gnarled, gentle hands of a loving grandfather  
to the birth-fresh fragility of a baby's fingernail;  
from the silence of the stars to the peal of thunder;  
from the mirror-like smoothness of a placid lake  
to the wind-driven thunderous waves smashing on the shore.

In the fresh greenery of the spring; in the dazzling color of autumn; in the joy of discovery on a baby's face; and in the fulfillment and meaning of the New Birth, we can see the glory of God.

### "Love of Creation"

Fedor Dostoevski

"Love all God's creation,  
the whole and every grain of sand in it.  
Love every leaf, every ray of God's light.  
Love the animals, love the plants, love everything.  
If you love everything,  
you will perceive the divine mystery in things.

Once you perceive it, you will begin to comprehend  
it better everyday.  
And you will come at last to love the whole world  
with an all-embracing love."

## **Stewardship Prayer Service (adapted from PVNCCDSB Character Initiative)**

### **Gathering Song**

**Leader:** We begin our prayer with the sign of our faith.

**All:** *In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.*

Gracious God, Creator and lover of life,  
We are part of your beautiful but fragile creation.  
You call us to be your stewards.  
We have the responsibility to protect, to nurture and to respect it.  
We seek a new relationship with your creation.  
Enkindle in us the fire of your love so that together we may renew the face of the  
Earth.  
We make this prayer in the name of Jesus who dwells within us.

**All:** *Amen.*

### **Scripture Reading:** (Ephesians 1:3-10)

A reading from a letter of Paul to the Ephesians

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

In him, we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

The Word of the Lord.

*Response: Thanks Be to God.*

### **Responsorial Reflection**

Left: Earth teach me stillness

Right: as the grasses that are stilled with light.  
 Left: Earth teach me suffering  
 Right: as old stones that suffer with memory.  
 Left: Earth teach me humility  
 Right: as blossoms that are humble with beginning.  
 Left: Earth teach me caring  
 Right: as the mother that secures her young.  
 Left: Earth teach me courage  
 Right: as the tree that stands all alone.  
 Left: Earth teach me freedom  
 Right: as the eagle that soars in the sky.  
 Left: Earth teach me resignation  
 Right: as the leaves that die in the fall.  
 Left: Earth teach me regeneration  
 Right: as the seed that rises in the spring.  
 Left: Earth teach me to forget myself  
 Right: as melted snow that forgets its life.  
 Left: Earth teach me to remember kindness  
 Right: as dry fields that weep with rain.  
 Left: Earth teach me to be a careful steward  
 Right: as our God who cares for all life.

### **Prayer of Commitment**

**Leader:** Let us make a commitment to heal the earth and one another.

The response to our prayer is: *"We pray for the earth and for each other."* (R)

To bring new life to the land, to restore its waters, to refresh its air. (R)

To renew the forests, to care for plants, to protect all creatures. (R)

To celebrate the seas and lakes, to rejoice in the sunlight, to sing songs of all the stars.

(R)

To create a human community that promotes justice and peace for all (R)

To heal our brothers and sisters who suffer illness caused by our misuse of your creation.

To honour those who protect, nurture and respect our Catholic faith. (R) (R)

### **Closing Prayer**

Let us pray,  
God of all creation, we thank you for your presence among us. We are thankful for the Earth which sustains us as we go out to do the work our faith calls us to do, to bring to fruition in Christ. We live graciously, filled with wonder for the marvel of creation that surrounds us. We marvel at the way the spirit came to expression in this planet.

We celebrate all the family of creation - heaven and earth - as one seamless garment, of which we, too, are an integral part. We celebrate the soils, which nurture the food of our bodies. We celebrate the seas, the air, the forests and mountains, which nurture our souls. As a part of all creation, we too have a nurturing role to play. We have been blessed with the ability to choose our role. Now in community, as your steward we dedicate ourselves to choosing wisely.

Together with the Holy Spirit, we will choose life that we and all the earth's children might live.

We ask for your guidance and wisdom as we seek to steward all of God's creation.

We make this prayer in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**All:** *Amen.*

## **Giving Thanks – Gold Eco School Celebration**

Renewing Our Pledge

### **Welcome:**

Good afternoon and welcome to all students, staff and special guests:  
We are happy you are all here to celebrate with us.

Please join us in our gathering song: \_\_\_\_\_

We have come together to give thanks for the changes we have made as an Eco School. Our gratitude also reminds us of our growing responsibility as stewards of God's creation. We have a responsibility to respect and care for the gifts we have been given. We can show we care by continuing to become more aware of how we can help by the little choices we make each day. By reducing, reusing, recycling and RETHINKING we all can make a difference.

Our school community is also celebrating our certification as a Gold Eco School. Congratulations to all the students, staff, families and friends in our larger community who have made this possible. It has truly been a team effort. Our faith is the precious gift we have been given. Faith that little steps and little choices can make a big difference.

### **Opening Prayer:**

We begin our prayer with the sign of faith.  
In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Gracious God, Creator and lover of life,  
We are part of your beautiful creation. You call us to be your stewards.  
We have the responsibility to protect, to nurture and to respect it.  
We seek a new relationship with your creation.  
Enkindle in us the fire of your love so that together we may renew the face of the Earth.  
We make this prayer in the name of Jesus who dwells within us.  
Amen

### **Scripture Reading:**

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy (Deut. 8:7-10)

For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land with flowing streams, with springs and underground waters welling up in valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, a land where you may eat bread without scarcity, where you will lack nothing, a land whose

stones are iron and from whose hills you may mine copper. You shall eat your fill and bless the Lord your God for the good land that he has given you.

The Word of the Lord

R: Thanks be to God

**Responsorial Reflection:**

Please join in our responsorial Reflection. The Response is: Thanks be to God.

Earth teach me stillness	- as the grasses that are stilled with light.	R:
Earth teach me caring	- as the mother that secures her young.	R:
Earth teach me courage	- as the tree that stands alone.	R:
Earth teach me to be a careful steward	-as our God who cares for all life.	R:

**Closing Prayer:**

Let us pray together The Prayer of St. Francis.

**Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
and where there is sadness, joy.**

**O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek  
to be consoled as to console;  
to be understood as to understand;  
to be loved as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive;  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen**

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, AMEN.

**Pledge:** An Eco Pledge will be sent home today. Each one of you can play an important part in changing the way we relate to our environment. By accepting the Pledge and practicing it each day you will be encouraging our community to believe that change can happen.

This is our Pledge:

1. To bring a waste free-boomerang lunch to school, recycle and compost at home or wisely use the recycling and compost at school
2. To help parents choose and prepare waste free lunches
3. To conserve energy at school by following best practice ideas
4. To Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Rethink at home and at school where possible
5. To help with our Peace Garden, naturalization projects and yard clean up

6. To share ideas to help make St. Marguerite Bourgeoys a successful Eco School

**Video:** To celebrate the changes we have made and to encourage us to continue with our goals, we will now watch our video “Becoming a Certified EcoSchool”.

**Guest Speakers:**

**Closing remarks:**

## **Prayer for the Environmental Common Good**

Author: Jane Deren

As we breathe the very air which sustains us,  
We remember your love, God,  
which gives us life.  
Fill us with your compassion for Creation.  
Empty us of apathy, selfishness and fear,  
of all pessimism and hesitation.  
Breathe into us solidarity  
with all who suffer now  
and the future generations who will suffer  
because of our environmental irresponsibility.  
Move us into action  
to save our earth  
and to build your sustainable Kingdom.  
Amen.

## **The Sacred Seven Prayers**

A Native American Prayer

O Great Spirit, who art before all else and who dwells in every object, in every person and in every place, we cry unto Thee. We summon Thee from the far places into our present awareness.

O Great Spirit of the North, who gives wings to the waters of the air and rolls the thick snowstorm before Thee, Who covers the Earth with a sparkling crystal carpet above whose deep tranquillity every sound is beautiful. Temper us with strength to withstand the biting blizzards, yet make us thankful for the beauty which follows and lies deep over the warm Earth in its wake.

O Great Spirit of the East, the land of the rising Sun, Who holds in Your right hand the years of our lives and in Your left the opportunities of each day. Brace us that we may not neglect our gifts nor lose in laziness the hopes of each day and the hopes of each year.

O Great Spirit of the South, whose warm breath of compassion melts the ice that gathers round our hearts, whose fragrance speaks of distant springs and summer days, dissolve our fears, melt our hatreds, kindle our love into flames of true and living

realities. Teach us that he who is truly strong is also kind, he who is wise tempers justice with mercy, he who is truly brave matches courage with compassion.

O Great Spirit of the West, the land of the setting Sun, with Your soaring mountains and free, wide rolling prairies, bless us with knowledge of the peace which follows purity of striving and the freedom which follows like a flowing robe in the winds of a well-disciplined life. Teach us that the end is better than the beginning and that the setting sun glorifies not in vain.

O Great Spirit of the heavens, in the day's infinite blue and amid the countless stars of the night season, remind us that you are vast, that you are beautiful and majestic beyond all of our knowing or telling, but also that you are no further from us than the tilting upwards of our heads and the raising of our eyes.

O Great Spirit of Mother Earth beneath our feet, Master of metals, Germinator of seeds and the Storer of the Earth's unreckoned resources, help us to give thanks unceasingly for Your present bounty.

O Great Spirit of our souls, burning in our heart's yearning and in our innermost aspirations, speak to us now and always so that we may be aware of the greatness and goodness of Your gift of life and be worthy of this priceless privilege of living.

by Noel Knockwood, Elder, <http://www.indians.org/welker/greatspi.htm>

## Earth Day Prayer Service from [www.holyfamilysisters.org](http://www.holyfamilysisters.org)

### Opening Prayer

Reader 1: How wonderful, O Lord, are the works of your hands! The heavens declare Your glory, the arch of sky displays Your handiwork.

All: The heavens declare the glory of God.

Reader 2: In Your love You have given us the power to behold the beauty of Your world, Robed in all Its splendor.

Reader 3: How wonderful, O Lord, are the works of your hands! The heavens declare Your glory, the arch of sky displays Your handiwork.

All: The heavens declare the glory of God.

Reader 4: In Your love You have given us the power to behold the beauty of Your world, Robed in all its splendor.

Reader 5: The sun and the stars, the valleys and the hills, the rivers and lakes, All disclose Your presence.

All: The Earth reveals God's eternal presence.

Reader 6: The roaring breakers of the seas tell of Your awesome might; The beasts of the fields and the birds of the air bespeak Your wondrous will.

All: Life comes forth by God's creative will.

Reader 7: In Your goodness You have made us able to hear the music of the world.

Reader 8: The raging of the winds, the whisperings of trees in the wood, and the precious voices of loved ones reveal to us that You are in our midst.

All: The Divine voice sings through all of creation.

*From the United Nations Environmental Sabbath*

Reading: *From the UN Declaration on Human Rights and the Environment, 1994*

Environmental rights are the rights of everyone to a secure, healthy and ecologically sound environment. Basic human rights such as the right to life, health and culture can only be enjoyed in a healthy and ecologically sound environment.

Everyone has ...

The Right to be consulted and included in any decisions affecting their environment.

The Right to accurate information concerning their environment.

The Right to express opinions and distribute Information on environmental issues.

The Right to education on the environment and human rights.

The Right to active and free participation in planning and decision making on the impact of any development that affects their environment.

The Right to associate freely and peacefully with others to protect the environment.

The Right to effective remedies and redress in administrative or judicial proceedings related to environmental harm or the threat of such harm.

## **Reflection**

The earth is ultimately a common heritage, the fruits of which are for the benefit of all. Today, the dramatic threat of ecological breakdown is teaching us the extent to which greed and selfishness-both individual and collective-are contrary to the order of creation, an order which is characterized by mutual interdependence.

*Pope John Paul 11, The Ecological Crisis: A Common Responsibility, 1990*

God wills the interdependence of creatures. The sun and the moon, the cedar and the little flower, the eagle and the sparrow: no part of creation is self-sufficient. Creatures exist only in dependence on each other, to complete each other, in the service of each other. *Catechism of the Catholic Church, #340.*

(Invite participants to share their responses to the reading and reflections.)

### **Prayers for the Earth and the Environment**

(Invite participants to offer specific prayers; after each individual petition, all should join in the response below)

**Response:** Help us respect, restore and renew the earth, O Lord.

### **Prayer of Commitment**

We commit ourselves to care for all the gifts of Creation. We commit ourselves to explore and understand environmental concerns. We commit to work with others for environmental justice for all. Come Holy Spirit, enkindle in us the fire of your love. Send your breath over the waters and we shall be re-created. And we shall renew the face of the Earth.

### **Concluding Prayer**

We pray for the waters of the rivers, that through God's grace we will fill them again with bountiful life.

We pray for the soil of the earth, that through God's grace we will work for abundant harvests for all.

We pray for the birds of the trees, that through God's grace we can offer them sheltering green leaves.

We pray for all of this sacred earth, that through God's grace and with God's help we will renew the music of creation's pulsating life. Amen.

## A Prayer Service for Earth Day

**Leader:** Come, let us praise God for the gift of Creation.

**All:** Creator God, we praise you for the grandeur of the universe.

We praise you for the gift of this Earth.

We praise you for the land, and we praise you for the seas.

We praise you for the great miracle of teeming life on our prolific planet.

We praise you for the cycle of growth and for the beauty of bursting blooms in the Spring time.

We praise you green growth of summer and for the holy harvest in the Fall.

We praise you for the infinity of different creatures on the land and in the sea,  
each unique in its own way,  
each fitting into the complex ecosystems you have gifted us with,  
each dependent on each other and the whole.

We praise you, our Creator.

Grace us with a sense of our responsibilities to preserve and protect your precious gift, this Garden, this Earth.

We praise you, Creator God, and we offer you our hearts and hands for the preservation of your Creation.

Because the earth was entrusted to human stewardship,  
the natural world is not just a resource to be exploited  
but also a reality to be respected and revered as a gift and trust from God.

It is the task of human beings  
To care for, preserve and cultivate the treasures of Creation. . .

... the natural resources of Creation need to be protected  
against the harmful policies of some industrialized nations  
and increasingly powerful transnational corporations which can lead to  
deforestation, despoliation of the land, pollution of rivers by mining, over-  
fishing of profitable species, or fouling the fishing-grounds with industrial  
and nuclear waste.

We must respond to the concerns of scientists about the warming of the global commons; the world's countries must work together, taking the necessary and responsible steps to curb this trend, for the good of all peoples and of Creation itself.

( from a homily by Pope John Paul II, November 22, 2001)

**Reflections:**

At its core, global climate change is not about economic theory or political platforms, nor about partisan advantage or interest group pressures.

It is about the future of God's creation and the one human family.

It is about protecting both "the human environment" and the natural environment.

It is about our human stewardship of God's creation and our responsibility to those who come after us.

With these reflections, we seek to offer a word of caution and a plea for genuine dialogue as nations face decisions about how best to respond to the challenges of global climate change.

All nations share the responsibility to address the problem of global climate change. But historically the industrial economies have been responsible for the highest emissions of greenhouse gases that scientists suggest are causing the warming trend. Also, significant wealth, technological sophistication, and entrepreneurial creativity give these nations a greater capacity to find useful responses to this problem. Energy resource adjustments must be made both in the policies of richer countries and in the development paths of poorer ones.

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, June, 2001

## Litany for a Changing World

**Leader:** Let us pray this litany for a changing world.

The response to each prayer is ...

**God, give us the grace to help heal this world  
and to reverse the effects of climate change.**

*(Repeat Response after each reader.)*

**Reader One:** The Earth's climate is changing  
and around the world we see the signs of the times.  
The seas are weeping and the land is in grief.

**Reader Two:** Everywhere on Earth, ice is changing. The famed snows of Kilimanjaro have melted more than 80 percent since 1912. Most central and eastern Himalayan glaciers could virtually disappear by 2035. **Response**

**Reader Three:** Arctic sea ice has thinned significantly over the past half century, and its mass has declined by about 10 percent in the past 30 years. NASA's readings show the edges of Greenland's ice sheet shrinking. **Response**

**Reader Four:** Spring ice breakup in the Northern Hemisphere now occurs 9 days earlier than it did in the last century, and autumn freeze-up 10 days later, causing the thawing of permanent frost in places such as Alaska. **Response**

**Reader Five:** From the Arctic to Peru, from Switzerland to the equatorial glaciers of Irian Jaya in Indonesia, massive ice fields, huge glaciers, and sea ice are disappearing, effecting animals and humans. **Response**

**Reader Six:** In the Antarctica, the sea ice has shrunk by a fifth, making it more difficult for penguins and birds of the region to survive. In Canada, the winter ice melts 2-3 weeks earlier than usual, and polar bears are having difficulty finding enough food. **Response**

**Reader Seven:** In the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, as in many other reefs, the warmer ocean water is destroying coral and other organisms. In the Virgin Islands in the Caribbean, the sea turtles are being effected by the warmer weather and their birth patterns are changing. **Response**

**Reader Eight:** In Argentina and other countries, rising temperatures and water shortages have sparked massive wildfires in the last decade. In Utah, and in other areas in western U.S., the weather has been increasingly dry and local water sources are lower than normal. **Response**

**Reader Nine:** In poor countries in Africa, such as Kenya and Tanzania, warmer weather has increased mosquitoes which carry malaria. Poor countries and people in poverty

will have to bear much of the burden of climate change, as they live in vulnerable areas and have few if any resources to cope with its effects. **Response**

### **Closing Prayer**

**Leader:** The seas are weeping and the land is in grief. But we are called to be signs of hope in this world, to be co-creators with God of a global community where the earth is respected and cherished.

We ask our Creator to give us discernment and to guide us as we become active members of the human family, working with our sisters and brothers to change the destructive trends that are causing global warming. We have been given a great gift, the richness of Creation, and as we celebrate the earth on this day, we pledge to protect this gift of God. Hear us Creator, and be with us every day as we seek to restore and preserve your Creation. Amen.

Factual Data from National Geographic web site articles, [www.nationalgeographic.com](http://www.nationalgeographic.com)

### **“Earth Hour” Prayer**

#### **Prayer One**

Today, as always, we call upon that which is most holy to us, the presence and power of God the Creator.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Loving Creator God, we thank you for the gift of creation and for the beauty of the Earth that you have given us.

Help us to care for and respect our Earth, our home in the universe. Help us to see ourselves as part of Creation, not separate from it and that when we damage Creation, we damage others, ourselves and our relationship with You.

As we celebrate Earth Hour we ask for your guidance in our attempts to care for your gift of creation. Encourage us to minimize our ecological footprints, keep our air pure, our earth bountiful, our waters clean and life-giving, and to remember that your gift was meant for all who live on this planet. Help us to live simply that others may simply live.

Make known to us Your plan for each of us in protecting and nurturing our planet, so that it remains sustainable and life giving to all Creation that shares our Earth now and in the future.

May this simple action of turning out the lights for one hour increase our awareness of our role as stewards of creation.

Plant in each of us an appreciation and love for your sacred Creation.

Breathe into us a gratitude for the earth today and every day.

We make this prayer through Jesus Christ, your Son. Amen.

**Prayer Two** (this has been designed for two voices)

Today, as always, we call upon the presence and power of God the Creator.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Dear God, We thank you for this day; for our friends, for our families, for our homes, for our school and for each of us, your Church here on earth.

May the simple action of turning out the lights for one hour help remind us of how important it is for us to care for all of your creation.

Today, as we celebrate Earth Hour

We join with you, each other and all of creation

**(voice 1)**

To bring new life to the land

To restore the waters

To refresh the air

We join with you, each other and all of creation

**(voice 2)**

To renew the forests

To care for plants

To protect all creatures

We join with you, each other and all of creation

**(voice 1)**

To celebrate the seas

To rejoice in the sunlight

To sing the song of the stars

We join with you, each other and all of creation

**(voice 2)**

To recreate the human community

To promote justice and peace

To treat one another with respect

We join with you, each other and all of creation

**(voice 1)**

For the healing of the earth and

the renewal of all life. Amen.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

(adapted from UN Environmental Sabbath Program)

## **Links to Earth Day Prayers and Other Liturgical Resources**

**We Dare to Say: Praying for Justice and Peace** (given to all ALCDSD schools fall 2008), pages 35 to 59

**Curriculum Support for Catholic Schools** – This on-line, EOCCC resource has a rich collection of scripture quotes, excerpts from Church documents, web links, quotations and more. It can be accessed from the EOCCC home page or at <http://www.eoccc.org/csfc/>

### **Benedictine Sisters of Erie**

<http://www.eriebenedictines.org/Pages/MONASTERYLIFE/backnews/earthday.html>

### **Appleseeds.org**

<http://www.appleseeds.org/creation.htm>  
<http://www.appleseeds.org/earthday.htm>  
<http://www.appleseeds.org/earthday.htm>  
<http://www.appleseeds.org/spurgeon.htm>

### **Education for Justice**

<http://www.educationforjustice.org/node/2388>  
<http://www.educationforjustice.org/node/1514>  
<http://www.educationforjustice.org/node/2356>  
<http://www.educationforjustice.org/node/2860>  
<http://www.educationforjustice.org/node/1356>  
<http://www.educationforjustice.org/node/1337>  
<http://www.educationforjustice.org/node/608>

### **Web of Creation**

<http://www.webofcreation.org/Worship/liturgy/prayers.htm>

### **Society of the Sacred Heart**

[http://www.rscj.org/misc/nourishing/earth\\_day\\_prayer\\_of\\_compassion\\_for\\_mother\\_earth.html](http://www.rscj.org/misc/nourishing/earth_day_prayer_of_compassion_for_mother_earth.html)

### **Sisters of the Holy Cross**

<http://www.cscsisters.org/justice/pdf/PrayerServicePDFs/earth%20day%2008.pdf>  
<http://www.cscsisters.org/justice/pdf/PrayerServicePDFs/2007%20earthday%20.pdf>  
<http://www.cscsisters.org/justice/pdf/EarthStationsscript.pdf> (earth stations)  
<http://www.cscsisters.org/justice/pdf/EarthStations04.pdf> (order of service for earth stations)  
<http://www.cscsisters.org/justice/pdf/PrayerServicePDFs/earth%20day%2008.pdf>

**The Weary Pilgrim**

[http://thewearypilgrim.typepad.com/the\\_weary\\_pilgrim/2007/04/earth\\_day\\_a\\_pra.html](http://thewearypilgrim.typepad.com/the_weary_pilgrim/2007/04/earth_day_a_pra.html)

**Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops 2008 Statement on the Environment  
*Our Relationship with the Environment: The Need for Conversion***

[http://www.cccb.ca/site/images/stories/pdf/enviro\\_eng.pdf](http://www.cccb.ca/site/images/stories/pdf/enviro_eng.pdf)

**Faith and the Common Good**

<http://www.faith-commongood.net/>