



Honoring and Protecting Creation

Music suggestions: For the Beauty of the Earth (Dix); For the Fruits of This Creation (Ar Hyd Y Nos); In the Day of the Lord (M. D. Ridge); Morning Has Broken (Bunessan); All Creatures of our God and (King Lasst Uns Erfreun)

Ambiance suggestions: Picture of Earth from space, pictures of garbage littering the environment with contrasting glass bowl filled with fresh, clear water, lit candle.

Introduction/opening prayer:

We celebrate the grace of reconciliation and healing by honoring and protecting our planet, the home of God's living creatures. In our time, we see that selfish and destructive human behaviors threaten the future of the only planetary home we know. This prayer invites us to enlarge our vision and horizon towards healing the wounds of our Mother Earth, while honoring the integrity of all God's Creation. We ask, then, to recognize our need for a change of heart in our view of Creation and to confront inner resistances, letting our hearts be touched by its wounded reality.



Reading I: Psalm 24 (version, Stephen Mitchell, alt.)

The earth belongs to the Lord,
and everything on it is the Lord's.
For God founded it in empty space
and breathed God's own life-breath into it,
filling it with manifold creatures
each one precious in God's sight.

Who is fit to hold power
and worthy to act in God's place?
Those with a passion for the truth,
who are horrified by injustice,
who act with mercy to the poor

and take up the cause of the helpless,
who have let go of selfish concerns
and see the whole earth as sacred,
Refusing to exploit her creatures
or to foul her waters and lands.

Their strength is in their compassion;
God's light shines through their hearts.
Their children's children will bless them,
And the work of their hands will endure.

Reading II: Romans 8: 19-24, 26-27

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have been first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved.

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.



Reading III: Acts of the 32nd and 34th General Chapters:

Recognizing that the planet we call home is facing dire threats from human activity, we commit ourselves to provide support for a healthy future for the generations after us.

We recognize that the social, political, economic and environmental problems of our century are global in nature and are integrally intertwined. We therefore pledge ourselves to see and participate in collaborative structures, relationships and actions that will liberate life where it is threatened.



Reflection questions:

When I consider our planet, our universe, and my place in it, how do I feel?

The necessity of healing our planet is clear. Where is this urgency leading me? Our congregation?

How are climate change, forgiveness and reconciliation related? What has to change?

Time for reflection/sharing

Intercessory prayers



Closing prayer:

As we breathe the very air that sustains us, we remember your love, O 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 for future generations who will suffer because of our environmental irresponsibility.

Move us to action to save our Earth and to build your sustainable reign among us all. Amen.



Prayer service created by: Elizabeth Liebert, SNJM; Opening and closing prayers and reflection questions adapted from *The Journey Makes Us One*: Religious of Jesus and Mary, Region of the Americas, July 2015. Permission to adapt granted.

The Spiritual Ministries Network of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary (SNJM) provides a variety of prayer services for personal and group spiritual nourishment. May your prayer life draw you closer to the Divine.

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