

GRATITUDE FOR THE BLESSINGS OF CREATION

Prepared by Marguerite Murphy, Katie Anders, Bette Gambonini (Care for Earth Committee)
November 21, 2022

Opening Song: Canticle of the Sun by Marty Haugen [CANTICLE OF THE SUN ~ Prayer of Saint Francis - Words – YouTube](#)

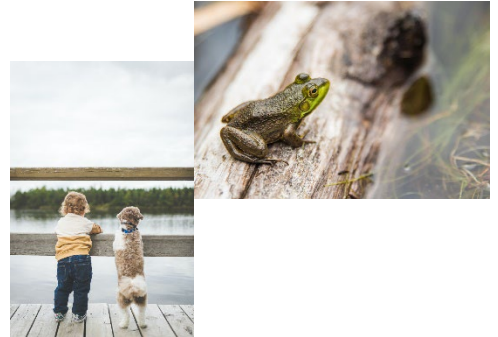
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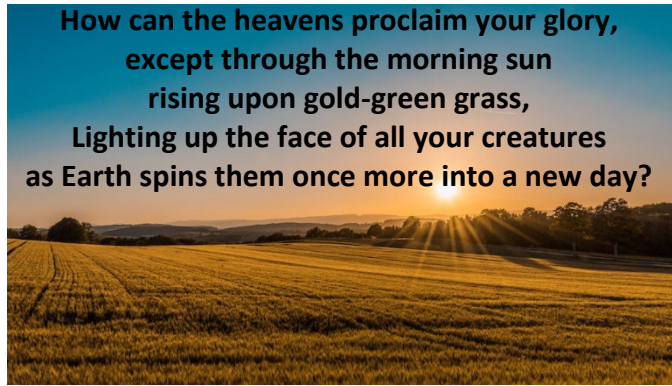
Opening Prayer:

Gracious God, how can creation sing your praises,
Except with the red wings of blackbirds flashing across blue sky,
And the croak and splash of frogs playing hide-and-seek in the ponds?

How can the firmament proclaim your handiwork,
except in the wagging tail of a puppy,
And the focused attention of a toddler soaking in the wonder of it all?



How can the heavens proclaim your glory,
except through the morning sun
rising upon gold-green grass,
Lighting up the face of all your creatures
as Earth spins them once more into a new day?



Your beauty and goodness, O Immanent One, requires Earth's diversity and our own wildness,
Breaking down -and out of- the monotony of prescribed patterns, choosing rather to take our place in the
dancing procession of differentness, the variegated life of Christ finding expression our bodies and the
bodies of our kin-creatures.

Make a harvest, O Holy One, of our quiriness, that we might be your radiant presence. Amen.

Adapted from If Darwin Prayed, Bruce Sanguin.

Reading I written by Sean Bradley

A couple weeks ago, I was walking with our dog in the early morning
on a tree-lined fairway. It was a calm morning, and of all the trees I could see,
I noticed one cottonwood's leaves were visibly quaking.

It was their rustling sound that first caught my attention.
I stopped to look and wonder at this lone voice, especially noticeable because
all the other trees seemed to still be asleep. Then I noticed another cottonwood
200 feet across the fairway also shaking and whispering.

Without thinking, I said to the trees, "Oh, you're talking to each other."
It seemed my cue to be quiet and move on.
There was no need to interrupt what looked like a private conversation.
I don't always need to understand everything that is going on around me.
Sometimes I just need to let it be.



Response:

Creator God, we give thanks

**as we rest ourselves amid the trees,
each with its own biological form,
structure, leaf and fruit.**

May we, like Sean, see their uniqueness.

May we nurture our gratitude and work to prevent the devastation of earth's forests.

Reading 2 written by Mary Martens, BVM

Outside our back door and on my walks around our Dubuque neighborhood, the Book of Nature indicates the seasonal change. Birds and animals are actively preparing, as geese overhead fly south and squirrels are storing nuts. Deer have shed their summer coats for the grey-brown of winter warmth. Summer garden blooms are mostly gone, as the vivid fall blooms react to cooler nights with more intense colors than their pastel brethren of the past season.



Trees are changing to the multiple, vibrant colors of autumn—each tree family according to its own time frame. Orange and yellow and red thrive together along the bluff. The Mississippi is a deep blue under sunshine, or a muddy brown under gray skies. As winds blow stronger and it's jacket weather, leaves are falling more rapidly and crunch underfoot.

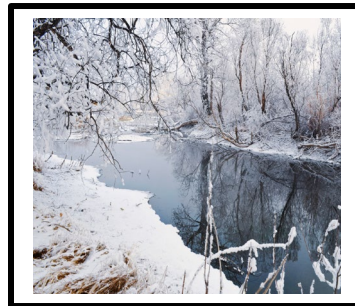


The season of creation has given way to the season of harvest and anticipates the resting season that comes.

Response

**Creator God, awaken us to nature's passage
of seasonal changes.**

**May we be aware of the glory of change
and perceive the cry of the earth
when destruction destroys
its ecological balance.**



Song: Table of Plenty by Dan Schutte

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Thank you, Kim for your recording for BVMs and permission to use your YouTube.

Come to the feast of heaven and earth!

Come to the table of plenty!

**God will provide for all that we need,
here at the table of plenty.**

**Your fields will flower in fullness;
Your homes will flourish in peace.
For I, the giver of home and harvest,
will send my rain on the soil.**

Reading 3 from Breeding Sweetgrass by Robin Wall Kimmerer

**“Gratitude is most powerful as a response to the Earth because it provides
an opening to reciprocity,
to the act of giving back,
to living in a way that the Earth
will be grateful for us.”**

Quiet Reflection

In this moment, for what in nature are you most grateful for?

What is it about your life that makes Earth grateful for you?

Reading 4: written by Mary Frances Reis, BVM Autumn Equinox

Listen to autumn
she has a homily for all
as she dons her sacred prayer shawl
of colors and hues that speak more deeply
than all the poems that enthrall!
She preaches of transition
non-lastingness
interior freedom to let go
and become open
to the nature of the soul.
Hush,
be still
listen to her sacred sounds
inhale her rustic scents
let your eyes cast upon the changing scene
that has so much to reveal
about aging and life that never ends
but only mystically transcends.



Autumn - Mount Carmel Bluffs - September 22, 2022 Mary Frances Reis

Ponder... Hush,

**be still
listen to her sacred sounds
inhale her rustic scents
let your eyes cast upon the
changing scene ...**

**Life never ends
but only
mystically
transcends.**



Song: We Shall be Known by McMUSE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aKhjaN72dRQ>

Thrive East Bay Choir Performing We Shall be Known by MaMuse at Bioneers 2017 Conference