

WORSHIP RESOURCES

Other voices

Marge Piercy – The Common Living Dirt

Tending a plot of your flesh binds
me as nothing ever could, to the seasons,
to the will of the plants, clamorous
in their green tenderness. What
calls louder than the cry of a field
of corn ready, or trees of ripe peaches?

I worship on my knees, laying
the seeds in you, that worship rooted
in need, in hunger, in kinship,
flesh of the planet with my own flesh,
a ritual of compost, a litany of manure.
My garden's a chapel, but a meadow
gone wild in grass and flower
is a cathedral. How you seethe
with little quick ones, vole, field
mouse, shrew and mole in their thousands,
rabbits and woodchuck. In you rest
the jewels of the genes wrapped in seed.

Power warps because it involves joy
in domination; also because it means
forgetting how we too starve, break
like a corn stalk in the wind, how we
die like the spinach of drought,
how what slays the vole slays us.

Because you can die of overwork, because
you can die of the fire that melts
rock, because you can die of the poison
that kills the beetle and the slug.
we must come again and worship you
on our knees, the common living dirt.

Francis of Assisi – Canticle of the Sun

Most high, almighty, and good Lord,
Yours is the praise, the glory, honour, blessing all.
To you, Most High, alone of right they do belong,
And no mortal man is fit to mention you.

Be praised, my Lord, of all your creature world,
And first of all Sir Brother Sun,
Who brings the day, and light you give to us through him,
And beautiful is he, a gleam with mighty splendour:
Of you, Most High, he gives us indication.

Be praised, my Lord, through Sisters Moon and Stars:
In the heavens you have formed them,
bright and fair and precious.

Be praised, my Lord, through Brother Wind,
Through Air, and cloudy, clear, and every kind of Weather,
By whom you give your creatures sustenance.

Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Water,
For greatly useful, lowly, precious, chaste is she.

Be praised, my Lord, through Brother Fire,
Through whom you brighten up the night,
And fair he is, and gay, and vigorous, and strong.

Be praised, O Lord, through our sister Mother Earth,
For she sustains and guides our life,
And yields us diverse fruits, with coloured flowers, and grass.

Be praised, my Lord, through those who pardon give for love of you,
And bear infirmity and tribulation:
Blessed they who suffer it in peace,
For of you, Most High, they shall be crowned.

Be praised, my Lord, through our Brother Death of Body,
From whom no one among the living can escape.
Woe to those who in mortal sins will die;
Blessed those whom he will find in your most holy graces,
For the second death will do no harm to them.

Praise and bless my Lord, and thank him too,
And serve him all, in great humility.

Diane Di Prima – Life chant

cacophony of small birds at dawn

– *may it continue*

bitter taste of early lettuce

– *may it continue*

music on city streets in the summer nights

– *may it continue*

kids laughing on roofs, on swings, on the beach, in the snow

– *may it continue*

triumphal shout of the newborn

– *may it continue*

deep silence of great rainforests

– *may it continue*

fine austerity of jungle peoples

– *may it continue*

rolling mating of great whales in turquoise ocean

– *may it continue*

clumsy splash of pelicans in smooth bays

– *may it continue*

astonished human eyeball squinting through aeons at astonished nebulae who squint back

– *may it continue*

clean snow on the mountain

– *may it continue*

fierce eyes, clear of light of the aged

– *may it continue*

rite of birth and of naming

– *may it continue*

rite of instruction

– *may it continue*

rite of passage

– *may it continue*

love in the morning, love in the noon sun, love in the evening among crickets

– *may it continue*

long tales by fire, by window, in fog, in dusk in the garden

– *may it continue*

the night music

– *may it continue*

screeching of cats on the backyard fence

– *may it continue*

without madhouses or prisons

– *may it continue*

without empire

– *may it continue*

in sisterhood

– *may it continue*

through the wars to come

– *may it continue*

in brotherhood

– *may it continue*

though the earth seem lost

– *may it continue*

through exile and silence

– *may it continue*

with cunning and love

– *may it continue*
as breath continues
– *may it continue*
as stars continue
– *may it continue*

may the wind deal kindly with us
may the fire remember our names
may springs flow, rain fall again
may the land grow green, may it swallow our mistakes

we begin the work
– *may it continue*
the great transmutation
– *may it continue*
a new heaven and a new earth
– *may it continue*
– *may it continue*

Adapted from <http://alabelforartists.blogspot.com/2007/03/diane-diprima-life-chant.html>

Gill Westcott – Climate adviser

You speak of loss, of sadness, anger, and of judgement.
But another narrative comes knocking at the door.
Climate is a mirror; it reflects
All we need to change.
Now the judgement is ours,
Time for Great Turning has come.
You hardly see it yet.
Guilt for self and race is the prelude; fear comes before,
Like a pounding heart before the starter's gun –
But we're off! The race has begun.
Will we bring back greater forests, let life revive in the oceans,
Take care of our obsession with numbers and with things,
Taking death as our adviser, rebuild communities, connect the creature to the mind,
Alter money, honour water and wells, share siblinghood, land and good harvests?
Will we succeed?
Who knows? Success was never guaranteed
In the greatest adventures,
In the time of challenge, the time of passage,
Time for the race to grow up.

Jürgen Moltmann

According to the biblical Jewish and Christian traditions, God created the world for his glory, out of love; and the crown of creation is not the human being; it is the Sabbath. It is true that, as the image of God, the human being has his special position in creation. But he stands together with all other earthly and heavenly beings in the same hymn of praise of God's glory, and in the enjoyment of God's Sabbath pleasure over creation, as he saw that it was good. Even without human beings, the heavens declare the glory of God.

Hildegard of Bingen

The Earth is at the same time mother,
She is mother of all that is natural,
Mother of all that is human,
She is the mother of all,
For contained in her
Are the seeds of all.
The earth of humankind
Contains all moistness,
All verdancy,
All germinating power.
It is in so many ways fruitful.
All creation comes from it.
Yet its forms not only the basic
Raw material for humankind,
But also the substance
Of the incarnation
Of God's son.

Julian of Norwich

Be a gardener.
Dig a ditch,
Toil and sweat,
And turn the earth upside down
And seek the deepness
And water the plants in time.
Continue this labour
And make sweet floods to run
And noble and abundant fruits
So spring.
Take this food and drink
And carry it to God
As your true worship.

Catholic Bishops of the Pacific Northwest

Creation is a 'book of nature' in whose living pages people can see signs of the Spirit of God present in the universe, yet separate from it... Each portion of creation can be sign and revelation for the person of faith, a moment of grace revealing God's presence to us.

Rachel Carson

To stand at the edge of the sea, to sense the ebb and the flow of the tides, to feel the breath of a mist moving over a great salt marsh, to watch the flight of shore birds that have swept up and down the surf lines of the continents for untold thousands of years, to see the running of the old eels and the young shad to the sea, is to have knowledge of things that are as nearly eternal as any earthly life can be.

Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts.

R. S. Thomas

It's a long way off, but inside it
There are quite different things going on:
Festivals at which the poor man
Is king and the consumptive is
Healed: mirrors in which the blind look
At themselves and love looks at them
Back: and industry is for mending
The bent bones and the minds fractured
By life. It's a long way off, but to get
There takes no time and admission,
Is free, if you will purge yourself
Of desire and present yourself with
Your need only and the simple offering
Of your faith, green as a leaf

Fyodor Dostoyevsky – The Brothers Karamazov

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 every day. And you will come at last to love the whole world with an all-embracing love.

Wangari Maathai

Repeated cycles of this abuse to the environment produce poverty, insecurity and desperation. Can we honestly ask God to intervene, or do we write letters to the relevant ministers of government? Do we demonstrate in the streets to register our disappointment with poor governance of natural resources or do we ask the angels in Heaven to do something about it? Do we make the connection between environmental degradation and the problems which communities face every day? When we make the connection, the God in us will move and energize us. It will guide us from apathy to action, from being observers to doers in the hope that those actions can make a difference.

We are called to assist the Earth to heal her wounds and in the process heal our own – indeed, to embrace the whole creation in all its diversity, beauty and wonder.

William Temple

“Worship is the submission of all nature to God. It is the most selfless emotion of which our nature is capable and therefore the chief remedy of that self-centredness which is our original sin and the source of all actual sin.

Thomas Edison

We are like tenant farmers chopping down the fence around our house for fuel when we should be using Nature's inexhaustible sources of energy — sun, wind and tide. ... I'd put my money on the sun and solar energy. What a source of power! I hope we don't have to wait until oil and coal run out before we tackle that.

Wendell Berry

The ecological teaching of the Bible is simply inescapable: God made the world because he wanted it made. He thinks the world is good and he loves it. It is his world; He has never relinquished title to it. And he has never revoked the conditions, bearing on his gift to us of the use of it, that oblige us to take excellent care of it. If God loves the world, then how might any person of faith be excused for not loving it or justified in destroying it?

To cherish what remains of the Earth and to foster its renewal is our only legitimate hope of survival.

Sallie McFague

Since for the Christian, God is always incarnate and present, there is no place on earth, no joy or wish that any creature experiences, no need or despair that they suffer, that is not a possible route to God. Wherever reality is seen as hopeful, joyful, and loving, God is there; wherever reality is experienced as despairing, cruel, and hopeless, God must be there also. If God is love, then where love is, God is; where love is not, God must needs be. In nature's health and beauty, I see God; in nature's deterioration and destruction, I see that God is here also. In the first case as a Yes and in the second as No: in the first case as a positive affirmation of God's glory through the flourishing of creation; in the second, as a negative protest against whatever is undermining God's creation.

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew

How we treat the earth and all of creation defines the relationship that each of us has with God...To commit a crime against the natural world is a sin. For humans to cause species to become extinct and to destroy the biological diversity of God's creation...for humans to degrade the integrity of Earth by causing changes in its climate, by stripping the Earth of its natural forests, or destroying its wetlands...for humans to injure other humans with disease... for humans to contaminate the Earth's waters, land, air, and life, with poisonous substances, these things are sins.

Dr Rowan Williams

We hope for a world in which we have learned to live with the grain of things, to live patiently, to live respectfully, to live in a way that takes our environment seriously...

Gregory Bateson

The major problems in the world are the result of the difference between how nature works and how people think.

Nelson Henderson

The true meaning of life is to plant trees under whose shade you do not expect to sit.

Thomas Fuller

We never know the worth of water 'til the well is dry.

Stewart Udall

Plans to protect air and water, wilderness and wildlife, are in fact plans to protect man.

Jane Goodall

What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.

Thomas Berry

The natural world is the larger sacred community to which we belong.

John Burroughs

I go to nature to be soothed and healed, and to have my senses put in order.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

The ultimate test of a moral society is the kind of world that it leaves to its children.

Jimmy Carter

Like music and art, love of nature is a common language that can transcend political or social boundaries.

John Muir

Every tree during the progress of gentle storms is loaded with fairy bloom at the coldest and darkest time of the year, bending the branches, and hushing every singing needle.

All the wild world is beautiful, and it matters but little where we go, to highlands or lowlands, woods or plains... the spot where we chance to be always seems the best.

Paul George

Wilderness areas are the Earth's wild gardens. Self-perpetuating, tended only by nature, these ancient ecosystems nurture and protect the vitality of the planet. Destroy them and the life-force of earth will wither.

Shrii Shrii Anandamurti

Everyone of us carries within, the hidden memory of that first sunrise, and even beyond it, into the darkness of antiquity. We are, by means of this primordial memory, which is part of our human heritage, intimately connected to all forms of life.

Ian Player

Wilderness is a sacred landscape. It will only survive when we all understand its spiritual value...

Sy Montgomery

...in the Amazon, the trees release their seeds to voyage on the water, and more than two hundred species of fruit-eating fish migrate into the flooded forest to gorge and to spawn. The fruit embarks on a journey of rebirth, and its splash is the first note in an unheard symphony...between water and trees, trees and fish, fish and mammals.

Hermann Hesse

Trees are sanctuaries. Whoever knows how to speak to them, whoever how to listen to them, can learn the truth. They do not teach learning and precepts, they preach, undeterred by particulars, the ancient law of life.

Native American observation

When you have cut down all the trees and polluted all the rivers, then you will understand that you cannot eat money.

Ed Miliband

"What haunts me is that this moment passes by without people realising how high the stakes are." 21st September 2009

Gerard Manley Hopkins

Glory be to God for dappled things...
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
Praise him.
Pied Beauty

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
God's Grandeur

Margaret Mead

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world.
Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

Mahatma Gandhi

Be the change you want to see in the world.

There is enough for everyone's need but not enough for everyone's greed.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

Come, my friends, 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

The ultimate test of a moral society is the kind of world that it leaves to its children.

Kofi Annan

If we are to go on living together on this earth, we must all be responsible for it.

Dalai Lama

It is our collective and individual responsibility...to preserve and tend to the environment in which we all live.

St Teresa of Avila

Christ has no body now on earth but ours
No hands but ours, no feet but ours
Ours are the eyes through which to look
with Christ's compassion on a troubled world
Ours are the feet with which he is to go about doing good
And ours are the hands with which to bless his creation NOW.