



School Sisters of Notre Dame

Atlantic-Midwest and Central Pacific Provinces

Prayer for the 2020 Anniversaries of Earth Day and Laudato Si



Call to Prayer:

This year, 2020, we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day and the 5th Anniversary of Pope Francis' encyclical on the environment, *Laudato Si*. Both anniversaries call us to focus our attention and care on our common home, Earth, and to make meaningful and sustainable responses to her suffering. The theme for Earth Day 2020 is *Climate Action*. The Climate crisis, which we now face, is characterized by a dramatic rise in global temperatures, rising and warming seas, droughts, famines, and the forced migration of many people who already live on the margins of society.

In *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis writes, “This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she “groans in travail” (Rom 8:22). We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth (cf. Gen 2:7); our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters.”

The anniversaries of Earth Day and Laudato Si summon us to gather, reflect, and recommit ourselves to the Care of Earth, our Common Home. How will our individual and collective choices and actions communicate our recognition of God, whose Ancient Love gave birth to the Universe and to Earth, our beloved home?

Opening Song and Reflection: *This Ancient Love* [click here](#) for YouTube video and Music copyright permission given by Carolyn McDade

Long before the night was born from darkness
 Long before the dawn rolled unsteady from fire
 Long before She wrapped her scarlet arm around the hills
 There was a love, this ancient love was born.

Long before the grass spotted green the bare hillside
 Long before a wing unfolded to wind
 Long before She wrapped her long blue arm around the sea
 There was a love, this ancient love was born.

Long before a chain was forged from the hillside
 Long before a voice uttered freedom's cry
 Long before She wrapped her bleeding arms around a child
 There was a love, this ancient love was born.

Long before the name of God was spoken
 Long before a cross was nailed from a tree
 Long before She laid her arm of colors 'cross the sky
 There was a love, this ancient love was born.

Wakeful is our night, Slumbers our morning
 Stubborn is the grass sowing green wounded hills
 As we wrap our healing arms to hold what her arms held
 This ancient love, this aching love rolls on.



Readings: (Read aloud by different voices with pauses in between)

"You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make." —Jane Goodall

"The earth is what we all have in common." —Wendell Berry

"Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together ... all things connect." —Chief Seattle

"A nation that destroys its soils destroys itself. Forests are the lungs of our land, purifying the air and giving fresh strength to our people." —Franklin D. Roosevelt

"Apprehend God in all things, for God is in all things. Every single creature is full of God and is a book about God." —Meister Eckhart

Reflection:

Sharing: Which of these quotes are especially meaningful to you? Is there another quote that you would like to share?

Response

Blessed: A Litany by Carolyn McDade and Mary Casey

Blessed be the Universe

All: Long unbroken story— spirit in all things

Blessed be the Earth

All: Dance born of burning— turning day to night, to dawn around an ancient sun

Blessed be the sea and sky

All: Stars and rain that wash each soul in reverence, and guide us home

Blessed be all who buzz and hiss, talk, croak, and warble

All: Those who push roots and shout green. Blessed all who pass breath between them

Blessed be all that struggle for their right to be

All: That within each that will not lie down— that sings the song its heart must sing

Blessed the elders who call us deep

All: Blessed the young who deepen. Blessed the generations who love this world, faithful to its wonder

Blessed all who choose to live whole and free

All: Grateful among the Blessed

Closing Song/Reflection: Same as opening song and video



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