

The CIRCLE of LIFE JOURNEY

Session 7 Respecting Creation for Future Generations

Next, on our CIRCLE OF LIFE JOURNEY —
Let us contemplate the SACRED GROUND
upon which the Dance of Life is unfolding . . .



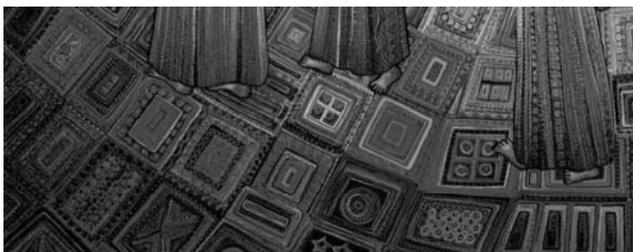
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“Remove the sandals from your feet,
for the place where you stand
is HOLY GROUND.”

Exodus 3:5



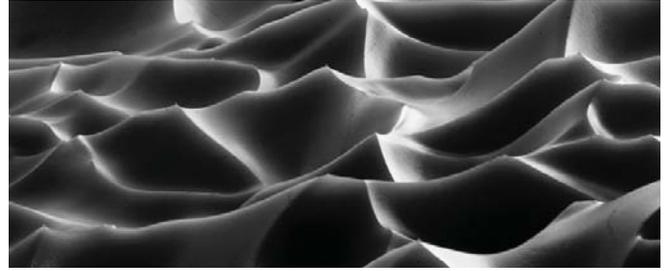
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Exodus 3:5



We are of the Earth,
and belong to it.

Every step we take
upon it
should be done
in a sacred manner . . .

Each step should
be as a prayer.

— Black Elk
Native American Spiritual Leader

*Respecting
CREATION for
FUTURE
GENERATIONS*



The beauty and grandeur
of nature
touches each one of us . . .



from panoramic views . . .

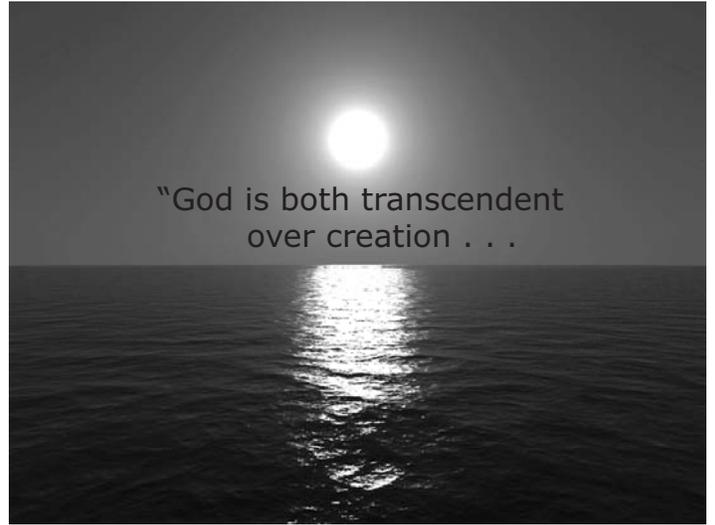


. . . to the tiniest living form.

Nature is a constant source
of wonder and awe.



It is also
a continuing
revelation
of the divine.



"God is both transcendent
over creation . . .



and immanently
present in each
creature."

— St. Thomas Aquinas

Each of the various creatures,
willed in its own being,
reflects in its own way a ray of God's
infinite wisdom and goodness.



We must therefore "respect the
particular goodness of every creature."

— Catechism of the Catholic Church 339

Our tradition calls us
to protect the life and dignity
of the human person in a special way,



and it is increasingly clear that this task
cannot be separated from the
care and defense of CREATION.

— *Renewing the Earth* U.S. Bishops

As Christians,
our Gospel call
is to LOVE GOD
and
LOVE OUR NEIGHBOR
— our fellow human beings —
especially
"the least among us".



But just as God
is not constrained
in time,

neither should
our love of others and
the least among us

be limited to those
now living.

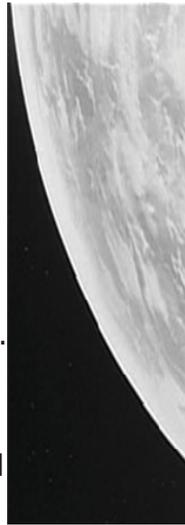


Our children,
and our children's children,
and generations yet unborn
will be touched
by OUR acts of love
— or lack thereof —
in the here and now.



Therefore our hearts
must expand to include
LOVE
for those in the present
— and future —
and to ensure that
the Earthly gifts
we have been given
will sustain them as well.

Hence we
are called to
CARE FOR CREATION



And herein lies
our call to
tread lightly
& prayerfully
on the
Sacred Ground
of our Earth.

This call to CARE FOR CREATION
is rooted in Scripture . . .



*God looked
at everything
he had made,
and he
found it
very good.*

Genesis 1:31



Humanity
is charged to:

*"have dominion
over all the living
things that move
on the earth. . ."*

. . . but at the
same time to:

"cultivate and care"
for creation.

Genesis 1:28, 2:15

The Story of Noah reminds us of
God's love for the animals . . .



but also of the link between
human wrongdoing and the resulting
harm to the rest of creation.

"Experience shows that
disregard for the environment
always harms human coexistence,
and vice versa."



— Pope John Paul II
World Day of Peace Message Jan 1990



God's glory is revealed
in the natural world,
yet we humans
are presently
destroying creation. . . .

In destroying creation
we are limiting
our ability to
know & love God.

Canadian Conference
of Catholic Bishops, 2003

What the Church teaches . . .

It becomes more and
more evident that there is
an inseparable link
between
PEACE WITH CREATION
and peace among
humankind.



Both of these presuppose
peace with God.

— Pope John Paul II *World Day of Peace Message Jan 1990*



What the Church teaches . . .

No peaceful society
can afford
to neglect either
RESPECT FOR LIFE
or the fact that
there is an
INTEGRITY
TO CREATION.



— Pope John Paul II *World Day of Peace Message Jan 1990*

What the Church teaches . . .

At its core,
the environmental crisis
is a MORAL CHALLENGE.

It calls us to examine
how we use and share
the goods of the earth,

what we pass on to future generations,
and how we live in harmony
with God's creation.



— *Renewing the Earth* U.S. Bishops

What the Church teaches . . .

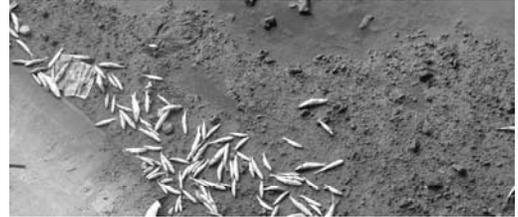


The most profound and serious indication of the moral implications underlying the ecological problem is the lack of **RESPECT FOR LIFE** evident in many of the patterns of environmental pollution.

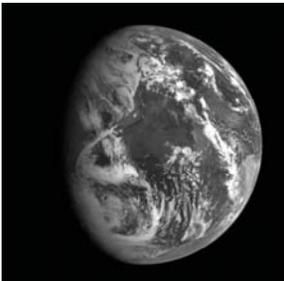
— Pope John Paul II *World Day of Peace Message* Jan 1990

. . . Therefore the land mourns, and everything that dwells in it languishes: The beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and even the fish of the sea perish.

Hosea 4:3



What the Church teaches . . .



Created things belong not to the few, but to the entire human family.

— *Renewing the Earth*
U.S. Bishops

What the Church teaches . . .

The option for the poor embedded in the Gospel and the Church's teaching makes us aware that



the poor suffer most directly from environmental decline and have the least access to relief from their suffering.

— *Renewing the Earth*
U.S. Bishops

What the Church teaches . . .

Global climate is by its very nature a part of the planetary commons.



The earth's atmosphere encompasses all people, creatures, and habitats.

— U.S Bishops, *Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence, and the Common Good*

What the Church teaches . . .

Climate change poses the question "What does our generation owe to generations yet unborn?"



Passing along the problem of global climate change to future generations as a result of our delay, indecision, or self-interest would be easy.

But we simply cannot leave this problem for the children of tomorrow.

— U.S Bishops, *Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence, and the Common Good*



Pope Benedict XVI
warns that
the poor and vulnerable

— the ones least
responsible for
contributing to
climate change —

will likely suffer its
worst consequences.

— World Day of Peace Message, 2008

The impact of **climate change** falls heaviest on the poor.
Our faith invites us to **tread lightly** and **act boldly**.

Catholic Coalition
on Climate Change

We are of the Earth, and belong to it.

Every step we take upon it
should be done in a sacred manner.



Each step should
be as a prayer.

The story of Noah ends
with God's marvelous promise
of a renewed, peace-filled covenant
between Creator and Creation:



*"I set my bow in the clouds
to serve as a sign of the covenant
between me and the earth."*

Genesis 9: 13

The "Love" that we receive
so that we might receive
the abundance of
grace that provide us
with the communities
and the life of the earth.

How can we not take up that
challenge?



Our Care for Creation Prayer

We join with God's creation
& with each other

*To bring new life
to the land*

To restore the waters

To refresh the air . . .



We join with
God's creation
& with each other

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



We join with God's
creation
& with each other

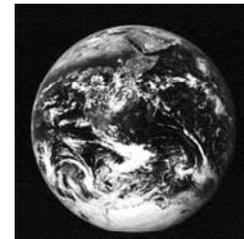
*To celebrate the seas
To rejoice in the sunlight
To sing the song
of the stars . . .*



We join with God's
creation
& with each other

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

*We celebrate
GOD'S CREATION.*



Amen

For more information visit:

The Catholic Coalition on Climate Change
www.catholicsandclimatechange.org

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Presentation prepared by K.K. Hirschboeck
Our Mother of Sorrows Parish
Christian Life Commission

