

5 Responsibility to Care for Creation: the Role of Humans

Check in

Grace: I ask for a consciousness to live my life in the world as a gift and in a way that makes God proud.

Hymn: *The Canticle of the Creatures* by St. Francis of Assisi (As One Voice)

Scripture: Genesis 2, 4-15

When the Lord God made the universe, ⁵ there were no plants on the earth and no seeds had sprouted, because he had not sent any rain, and there was no one to cultivate the land; ⁶ but water would come up from beneath the surface and water the ground.

⁷ Then the Lord God took some soil from the ground and formed a man out of it; he breathed life-giving breath into his nostrils and the man began to live.

⁸ Then the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the East, and there he put the man he had formed. ⁹ He made all kinds of beautiful trees grow there and produce good fruit. In the middle of the garden stood the tree that gives life and the tree that gives knowledge of what is good and what is bad.

¹⁰ A stream flowed in Eden and watered the garden; beyond Eden it divided into four rivers...

¹⁵ Then the Lord God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.

Explanation: Our Christian conviction tell us this earth is a gift: This earth and its unique thin covering layer, is not our property, but a gift from God, which we have to sustain and to protect by all means. It is the duty of each human generation to leave behind this earth to our children and grandchildren in ways which still allow for sustainable and acceptable living conditions in future for all. *The rediscovery of nature can never be at the cost of the freedom and responsibility of human beings who, as part of the world, have the duty to cultivate their abilities in order to protect it and develop its potential. If we acknowledge the value and the fragility of nature and, at the same time, our God-given abilities, we can finally leave behind the modern myth of unlimited material progress. A fragile world, entrusted by God to human care, challenges us to devise intelligent ways of directing, developing and limiting our power.* Laudato Si #78

Exercise (in silence I ponder these questions): When have I acted as a gardener of our common earth? When do I take care of our common house, of the people, creature, elements with whom I share the rooms of this house. What were my feelings at that time? How did I feel linked with God?

How do I convey these gardening actions? Do I share them with family, friends, poor people? What arguments do I have to the one who says that the care of creation is not their priority?

When do I face my limits? What brakes to action against the earth do I face? How do I ask God's help?

Sharing: what in this session most touched me?

Final Prayer: A prayer for our earth, *Laudato Si*

*All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.
Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty.
Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one.
O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes.
Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.
Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature
as we journey towards your infinite light.
We thank you for being with us each day.
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.*

Ongoing practice: Be mindful of natural places we love. For the love of these places we will change some habits. Exchange seeds and plant them. Organize a cleaning day between generations. Pray for our planet, to take care of it like a garden.

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