



Leader:

Earth Day, April 22, 2017 marks the 48th anniversary of the decision made at the UNESCO conference in San Francisco to establish this annual observance. But it was in November of 1962 that Senator Gaylord Nelson, founder of Earth Day, began to contemplate a day to reflect, act and celebrate our planet. Rachel Carson's *SILENT SPRING* had just been published as a series of articles. Mutually enhancing visionaries! We celebrate Earth Day during the season of spring in the Northern Hemisphere and from the time of liturgical celebrations in several religions that mark new life and exodus from bondage to freedom. This year Earth Day is celebrated on the Saturday after Easter Sunday.

As we unite on this Earth Day celebration we are aware of the threats to our interrelated Earth. But there are also the possibilities to be celebrated: visions for healing created by regenerative ecological networks. Tapestries as human consciousness inter-graces its transformed presence around our home planet, inclusive, dynamic, a continuous weave of complexity and communion. It is an appropriate time to pause for reflection and prayer.

Reflection: (Reader)

By means of all created things, without exception, the divine assails us, penetrates us, and molds us. We imagine it as distant and inaccessible, whereas, in fact, we live steeped in its burning layers. Teilhard de Chardin. (short pause, and then repeat these two sentences slowly.)

(Reader) **Pause for a few moments' quiet reflection of living steeped in the wonder, variety, individuality and "interbeing" of Earth's existence in our solar system and universe.**

Reading

I stood willingly and gladly in the character of everything, people, trees, clouds. And this is what I learned: that the world's otherness is antidote to confusion; that standing within this otherness - the beauty and mystery of the world - can re-dignify the worst-stung heart. (Mary Oliver)

Leader: **Let us be lifted by gratitude and wonder for being steeped in fiery layers of divine presence.** (give directions to pray from two sides of the room.)

Response: All Together: *Font of Love and Wonder of Faithfulness, we give thanks.*

Side 1: for the revelation of creative love, ever ancient, ever new, flaring forth from the beginning when time and space began,

Font of Love and Wonder of Faithfulness, we give thanks.

Side 2: for Earth's continuing differentiation, from stardust through its 5 billion year story into a future full of hope,

Font of Love and Wonder of Faithfulness, we give thanks.

Side 1: for Earth's capacity to create, to heal, to diversify, to adapt, to be dynamic, intrinsically interrelated through time and space,

Font of Love and Wonder of Faithfulness, we give thanks.

Side 2: for colorful and nurturing gifts unfolding in our era: flowers and trees, fish and mammals, human beings who collaborate and bond, in awe of having become the self-reflective consciousness of our planet,

Font of Love and Wonder of Faithfulness, we give thanks.

Side 1: for the power of water, soil, air, climate, flora and fauna, to be poised in the ever changing beauty and terror of their bioregions.

Font of Love and Wonder of Faithfulness, we give thanks.

Side 2: for the challenges encountered during Earth's long story, and for her creative resolutions fostering healing and new life,

Font of Love and Wonder of Faithfulness, we give thanks.

Side 1: for Rachel Carson and Senator Gaylord Nelson en-spirited "to pay attention, to be astonished and to tell about it,

Font of Love and Wonder of Faithfulness, we give thanks.

Side 2: for Pope Francis, whose commitment to care for our common home celebrates the communion of species, peoples, their places and organizations throughout the world,

Font of Love and Wonder of Faithfulness, we give thanks.

Side 1: for indigenous wisdoms everywhere and especially for the Stand Rock Sioux, whose actions for justice and a continental change of heart are embedded in the immensities of creation,

Font of Love and Wonder of Faithfulness, we give thanks.

Side 2: for our sisters and brothers whose great work teaches us that "we live in a universe with an inner spiritual reality,"

Font of Love and Wonder of Faithfulness, we give thanks.

Song: Touch The World With Gentleness by Sr. Kathy Sherman, CSJ (Use this song with a YouTube download of the melody, and sing along, or play a different quiet melody and read the words) (or choose a song from the music issue.)

Refrain: Touch the earth with gentleness; touch the earth with love,
Touch her with a future by the way you live today.
God has given us the power to create the world anew,
if we touch the earth together, me and you.

1. The time is here, the time is now. We can change things.
Give the earth your dream for harmony; she is waiting, waiting for love
waiting for you, waiting for me. To... (refrain)
2. Show the earth you care about her future,
melt the walls of hate and fear that keep us apart.
Believe we can live together as friends of the earth. (refrain)
3. So be the reason, be the hope for others to believe
that the earth is meant for beauty, goodness and peace,
and that our God of love is God of the earth's one family. So (refrain)

Let us deepen our commitment to care for Earth:

Take turns individually reading the following litany: **Response: All:**

We pledge our life and treasure to the unfolding peace of Earth, our common home.

1. Because stockpiles of nuclear weapons threaten all life: the mouse, the egret, the grasslands, all homelands;

Because war and the exaggerations of power are not needed for the unfolding of the human soul,

We pledge our life and treasure to the unfolding peace of Earth, our common home.

2. Because climate change is breaking hearts, making ice floes, shattering communities;

Because our perception of wealth has calcified "matter" as material to be exploited, no body is sacred;

We pledge our life and treasure to the unfolding peace of Earth, our common home.

3. Because seed-saving practices and water-saving activism are seen as backward, time-wasting and of no value to our obsession with personal life style, efficiencies and technologies;

Because the oceans are dying and we are in denial, reluctant to learn from the fish.

We pledge our life and treasure to the unfolding peace of Earth, our common home.

4. Because deforestation desecrates the regenerative powers of soil, water, air and Mystery within the great greening of the planet;

Because human ignorance exploits humans and our sister and brother species, especially where we live.

We pledge our life and treasure to the unfolding peace of Earth, our common home.

5. Because "standing with the other" is the contemplation of divine presence crucified and risen.

We pledge our life and treasure to the unfolding peace of Earth, our common home.

Pause for a few moments' quiet reflection. Share at this time, if you wish:

Imagine the joy of evoking Earth's future!

Closing prayer:

Font of Life and Wonder of Faithfulness, we, being of Earth and stirred by the Spirit living and acting within us, join together this Earth Day to rekindle awe and commitment to our cherished planet. Forgive us our trespasses for having brought about an epoch of great extinction. May the hardship of restoration be our practice of resurrection, taken up with gladness and joy. Amen

Closing Song: "What A Wonderful World" (or another song from the Music Issue)

(Lyrics of What a Wonderful World sung by Louis Armstrong - recorded 1967. Play by YouTube and sing along.)

1. I see trees of green, red roses too; I see them bloom for me and you.
And I think to myself: what a wonderful world!

2. I see skies of blue, and clouds of white; the bright blessed day; the dark sacred night.
And I think to myself: what a wonderful world!

Refrain: The colors of the rainbow, so pretty in the sky, are also on the faces, of people going by,
I see friends shaking hands, saying, "How do you do?"
They're really saying: "I love you".

3. I hear babies cry, I watch them grow; they'll learn much more than I'll ever know.
And I think to myself: what a wonderful world!
Yes, I think to myself: **What a wonderful world.**