



Christ in Our Neighborhood

Prayer

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. Amen (Laudato Si')

Commentary

1st Reading: Isaiah 5:1-7

The beauty of creation is a reflection of the Creator. I have traveled to many places in my life and I have never found a place where I was not in awe and wonder of the beauty of the earth. Here, God has created a beautiful home for all His children.

Question

- Where/how have you experienced God in the beauty of the earth?

Commentary

2nd Reading: Philippians 4:6-9

There was a time out of necessity that I attempted to do my own repairs to my car. Some parts I could replace very easily, but other work took skills and knowledge that I did not have to complete the work. The thing about car parts is that they don't work well if they are not installed as they were designed. All of the parts need to fit as designed for the car to run well.

It's the same with our lives. God created each unique person to know Him and to love Him above all else, and to love our neighbors as our selves. When we are in right relationship with these three, then all the parts of our lives can work well. If we fail to love God, our neighbor, or ourselves, our lives will not work well.

We need to be in right relationship with all three to find peace and joy.

Question

- What does St. Paul mean when he asked the Philippians to keep on doing what they have learned and received and heard and seen in him so that the God of peace will be with them?
- What words or examples have you seen from others that have helped you to love God above all else, and to love your neighbor as yourself?
- How could our responsibility as good stewards of the earth help or hinder our relationship with God, others, and ourselves?

This series in our Christ in Our Neighborhood program focuses on celebrating life in all its forms.

Information: dphx.org/Christ-in-our-neighborhood

Commentary

Gospel: Matthew 21:33-43

The Gospel of Luke tells us that as Jesus drew near, He saw Jerusalem and wept over it, saying, “If this day you only knew what makes for peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes.”

God provided for and guarded His chosen people for many generations, and yet they failed to recognize Him at the time of his visitation.

We might wonder how such a thing could have happened, and say if we were there we would have recognized Jesus as the Son of the Living God.

Jesus promised that He will be with us until the end of time, and God continues to provide for us and protect us; yet can we truly say we are always thankful and respectful for the gifts that God provides for us?

Just as being in right relationship with God, neighbor, and self helps us to find peace and joy, being in right relationship with creation is also necessary. The pollution and damage of creation can cause widespread impacts to ourselves and our neighbors for generations to come. If we truly love God, and our neighbor, and ourselves, we also need to care for creation.

Question

- How can being a good steward of creation show our thankfulness and respect to God and our neighbor?
- How does caring for creation help us to offer a fruitful harvest to our Creator?
- What one thing can you do to be a better steward of creation?

This Week's Task

- Make one change in your life to become a better steward of God's creation.

Group Prayer

The leader invites the group to pray the following words together.

God of love, show us our place in this world as channels of our love for all the creatures of this earth, for not one of them is forgotten in your sight.

Enlighten those who possess power and money that they may avoid the sin of indifference, that they may love the common good, advance the weak, and care for this world in which we live.

The poor and the earth are crying out. O Lord, seize us with your power and light, help us to protect all life, to prepare for a better future, for the coming of your Kingdom of justice, peace, love and beauty.

Praise be to you! Amen. (Laudato Si')

The leader will guide the group in praying Psalm 80 (from the 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time)

Psalm

Psalm Response: The vineyard of the Lord is the house of Israel.

A vine from Egypt you transplanted; you drove away the nations and planted it. It put forth its foliage to the Sea, its shoots as far as the River.

R. The vineyard of the Lord is the house of Israel.

Why have you broken down its walls, so that every passerby plucks its fruit. The boar from the forest lays it waste, and the beasts of the field feed upon it?

R. The vineyard of the Lord is the house of Israel.

Once again, O LORD of hosts, look down from heaven, and see; take care of this vine, and protect what your right hand has planted the son of man whom you yourself made strong.

R. The vineyard of the Lord is the house of Israel.

Then we will no more withdraw from you; give us new life, and we will call upon your name. O LORD, God of hosts, restore us; if your face shine upon us, then we shall be saved.

R. The vineyard of the Lord is the house of Israel.

Conclude with an Our Father