

VESPERS FOR EARTH DAY

Place symbols of earth on the altar: water, soil, rock, plants, etc.

Call to Prayer: Because we recognize creation as God's gift to us, the Sisters of Christian Charity are committed to a harmonious and interdependent relationship with the earth and its creatures. We will be guided by the principles of sustainability and environmental accountability in our decisions and actions as we claim our responsibility toward self, others, and all of creation. *-Provincial Statement, adopted April 6, 2008*

Hymn: Song of Earth (*melody of Jesus Christ is Risen Today*)

Hail the earth that first appeared. Alleluia!
When a word from God was heard. Alleluia!
Let the Earth arise and be. Alleluia!
Filled with living mystery. Alleluia!

Hail the planet blue and green. Alleluia!
Where the face of God is seen. Alleluia!
Glory filling all the earth. Alleluia!
Celebrating every birth. Alleluia!

Hail the groans of Earth in pain. Alleluia!
From the weight of human sin. Alleluia!
Longing for the Christ who died. Alleluia!
All creation to revive. Alleluia!

Psalm I: Ant. The earth is filled with the presence of God.

Planet Earth, spinning silently through space:
Celebrate your beauty and your grace,
Your special place in our solar system.

Planet Earth, gleaming green and blue:
Rejoice in your ocean currents,
As they dance and swirl with hope.

Planet Earth, pulsing with life:
Join in praise with all your fauna and flora
As they sing their songs to the Lord.

Planet Earth, enveloped in the breath of God:
Bless all your creatures this day
With the life-giving breath of God.

Planet Earth, our precious, fragile home:
Celebrate, with all your children
God's presence in our planet home.

We celebrate the song of our planet!
Sing, planet Earth, sing.

Psalm II Ant. Praise our Creator God and celebrate the gift of our planet earth.
(Face each of the 4 directions as they are mentioned.)

Come, God of the North, God of the earth,
We invoke you and call you.
You bring us the stars, stones, mountains and fields of green.
Send forth your strength. Be here with us now!

Come, God of the East,
We invoke you and call you.
Whirlwind, God of the birds that fly,
God of the rising sun, of all there is to know.
Send forth your light. Be here with us now!

Come, God of the South, God of fire,
We invoke you and call you.
You bring us the warmth of summer.
Send us your fire. Be here with us now!

Come, God of the West, God of water,
We invoke you and call you.
You bring us feelings of care and love.
You bring us the cleansing rain, the rivers, the sea.
Send forth your soothing love. Be here with us now!

Come, God of the center,
Spirit of our hearts and our lives.
We invoke you and call you.
You bring us power, creativity, adventure.
You bring us laughter and tears.
You are our hope; it is you we long for.
Send forth your spirit. Be here with us now!

Reading: “The Way Forward” from *The Earth Charter*

As never before in history, common destiny beckons us to seek a new beginning. Such renewal is the promise of these Earth Charter principles. To fulfill this promise, we must commit ourselves to adopt and promote the values and objectives of the Charter.

This requires a change of mind and heart. It requires a new sense of global interdependence and universal responsibility. We must imaginatively develop and apply the vision of a sustainable way of life locally, nationally, regionally, and globally. Our cultural diversity is a precious heritage and different cultures will find their own distinctive ways to realize the vision. We must deepen and expand the global dialogue that generated the Earth Charter, for we have much to learn from the ongoing collaborative search for truth and wisdom.

Life often involves tensions between important values. This can mean difficult choices. However, we must find ways to harmonize diversity with unity, the exercise of freedom with the common good, short-term objectives with long-term goals. Every individual, family, organization, and community has a vital role to play. The arts, sciences, religions, educational institutions, media, businesses, nongovernmental organizations, and governments are all called to offer creative leadership. The partnership of government, civil society, and business is essential for effective governance.

In order to build a sustainable global community, the nations of the world must renew their commitment to the United Nations, fulfill their obligations under existing international agreements, and support the implementation of Earth Charter principles with an international legally binding instrument on environment and development.

Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life.

Response: *(all)* We believe that with Christ we will rise and with Christ we will celebrate a new creation.

Mary's Song of Praise *(melody of Amazing Grace)*

My soul proclaims the Lord my God.
My spirit sings God's praise,
Who looks on me, and lifts me up,
That gladness fills my days.

All nations now will share my joy;
For gifts God has out-poured.
This lowly one has been made great.
I magnify the Lord.

For those who fear the Holy one,
God's mercy will not die.
Whose strong right arm puts down the proud,
And lifts the lowly high.

God fills the hungry with good things,
And sends the rich away;
The promise made to Abraham is filled to endless day.

Then let all nations praise our God,
The Father and the Son,
The Spirit blest, Who lives in us,
While endless ages run.

Commission:

Leader: Christ calls us to be his disciples, to serve him with love and compassion, to serve the Earth by caring for creation, honoring the planet God has created to be our home.

All: We will follow our crucified Lord, listening for cries of injustice from Earth and groaning with creation. We will follow the risen Christ to become partners in healing our planet. We will care for creation, nurturing our planet and celebrating life.

(At this time, each local community could review its chosen "Action to Care for Creation" from last April and re-commit itself to carrying out this action. Additional actions may emerge as a result of this prayerful time.)

Closing Prayer:

Creator God, teach us to be at one with planet Earth. Make our spirits sensitive to the cries of creation, cries for justice from the seas, the skies, and the land.

Creator God, make our souls sensitive to the songs of our kin, songs of celebration from the sea, the land and the air.

Creator God, teach us to care for our planet, the work of your hands. **Amen.**

Closing Blessing:

Now may the penetrating power of Christ's body and blood reach down into your heart, your mind, and your body to heal your wounds and, through you, to bring healing to Earth in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

May the Spirit of God, who is above all and in all and through all, fill you with the knowledge of God's presence in earth and with the pulsing of Christ in creation. **Amen.**

May the Lord bless us and protect planet earth and lead us to everlasting life. **Amen.**