

# EARTH DAY 2020



Earth Day: April 22, 2020 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Earth Day. The Covid-19 crisis is happening alongside the climate crisis. As a result, our annual Earth Day Celebration with Evening Prayer and Labyrinth Walk was cancelled. This prayer is adapted from the Catholic Climate Covenant's 2020 Earth Day program which focuses on the urgent need for climate action. It is designed to help the U.S. Catholic community commemorate the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, a secular celebration many faith communities have incorporated into their annual calendars for awareness and action.

We have also included a video from the Franciscans Sisters of Clinton, Iowa. You may have to copy and paste into your browser.

Air, Water, Soil and Fire are the elements that we celebrate and an opportunity to spend time with them is included.

If possible, spend some time outdoors basking in the splendor of the oneness of God's creation.

Sister Annette Dworsky, OP was to give the reflection during our Evening Prayer. Her reflection and reflection questions are attached.

# *EARTH DAY*

## *50TH ANNIVERSARY*



### **OPENING PRAYER:**

O Creator,

Our world is large, and yet your Creation is so fragile. We glimpse the needs of our common home, of our sisters and brothers, and those needs are great.

We want to turn away, but you call us back. We want simple solutions, but you want us to help solve the complex problems.

Through your Church, you call us to listen, to learn, to reflect and to act.

Give us a deep sense of our place in this web of Creation. Give us the wisdom of mind and generosity of heart to seek your will in the world today. Inspire us to respond to the call to live in solidarity with all of your Creation, so that the Earth, and all children of God might live in dignity and peace.

Amen

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### **READINGS:**

**Reading #1** “Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deluding yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his own face in a mirror. He sees himself, then goes off and promptly forgets what he looked like. But the one who peers into the perfect law of freedom and perseveres, and is not a hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, such a one shall be blessed in what he does.” (James 1: 22-25)

**PAUSE/REFLECT:** What can you (and/or your community/family) do to become doers and not just “hearers”?

**Reading #2** “The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development...Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home. Young people demand change. They wonder how anyone can claim to be building a better future without thinking of the environmental crisis and the sufferings of the excluded.” (Laudato Si’ 13) “I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all.” (Laudato Si’ 14)

**PAUSE/REFLECT:** How could you (and/or your community) respond to the Holy Father’s urgent appeal for dialogue and action?

### **TAKE ACTION:**

The Sisters of St. Francis of Clinton, Iowa released a short video in which the sisters demonstrate simple steps we can all take to help protect the planet – our common home! <https://youtu.be/0qWDbTXGzII>

Below is a list of actions people can take to protect our common home. As you review the list, celebrate the actions you and/or your community/family are taking. Consider other actions you can take to reduce your carbon footprint or make yourself and other aware of climate vulnerability.

- Calculate my carbon footprint and commit to reduce it by at least 10% in 2020
- Refuse disposable plastic bottles, bags, straws, cutlery, and cups! Say NO to single-use plastic.
- Walk, cycle, carpool, or use public transport
- Plant pollinator-friendly flowers and spread wildflower seeds.
- Switch to renewable energy
- Go meatless on Mondays and/or Fridays
- Refuse, reuse, recycle, lower my consumption of resources
- Use less water
- Speak to my elected officials about climate change
- Fly less and offset travel when possible
- Plant at least two trees in 2020
- Wash clothes in cold water and hang-dry clothes
- Install a programmable thermostat
- Replace appliances with Energy Star-rated ones
- Replace incandescent and compact fluorescent lights with LED lights.
- Reduce my food waste
- Compost leaves and food waste
- Start conversations about climate change with family and friends
- Support youth-led climate movements
- Start/join a Creation Care Team in my parish or school
- Begin conversations about climate change with family and friends
- Pray for our common home and all Earth protectors
- Participate in public witness events that lift up care for creation
- Other (name it)

**CELEBRATE:**



**AIR:** Take a deep breath and let the air out slowly and say a prayer of thanksgiving for the air we breathe so naturally and take for granted.



**WATER:** Take a drink of water, sip it slowly, notice how refreshing it is. Say a prayer of thanksgiving for the many ways that water is available to us.



**DIRT/SOIL:** Go outside or find a plant touch the soil, dig, if possible, with your finger, notice how it feels. Say a prayer of thanksgiving for the many things that soil provides us.



**FIRE:** Light a candle, observe the flame, its color, how it dances and say a prayer for the many ways that fire is used for our benefit and comfort.

**CLOSING PRAYER:**

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and the 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.

*Laudato Si'*