

Eco-Examen Prayer

This evening we are going to pray about creation using a prayer method called 'Eco-Examen' – that name or title doesn't matter. It is derived from another prayer called Examen that was developed by St Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits. It's a form of prayer that helps us recall the day as we remember it and then noticing where God was present and active in the day with us.

This Eco- Examen prayer helps us to reflect on our personal relationship with creation, to notice the ways in which we care for it as well as the ways we neglect it. And then to reflect on what we can change in our lifestyle that will help promote justice and respect for creation as well as help us support those who suffer most from damage done to the natural world and the climate.

So let us begin this time of prayer:-

If it helps you sit comfortably with your eyes closed. Notice your breathing – When you inhale, thank God for the gift of your breath. When you exhale, let go of any concerns, worries or things you need to do later. Leave all of them in God's hands for now.

There are several steps in this prayer – I will pause at different times for you to reflect and pray in the silence. I will place resources on the website based on this creation prayer so that you can prayer this way at your own pace.

STEP 1. As we begin, become aware of the person you are. Remember you are God's creation, wonderfully made in God's eyes. Remind yourself, that all you have, all creation and the earth we inhabit are gifts to us from our loving Creator.

I invite you now to give thanks to God who created the Earth, all the creatures upon the Earth, the fish of the sea, the birds that soar through the skies, the trees, the sun and moon, stars, air and clouds, the rivers and seas that give us life. Thank God for your own life and all the created things that sustain your life. Everything you are is a gift from God.

STEP 2. I ask God my Father to help me see the beauty of the world in all its goodness, the variety of created things, the kaleidoscope of colours, the ways in which everything is connected. (To make this very visual for yourself, remember your favourite nature scene, a plant or tree you have grown, a family pet, or some nature photos you have on your phone.) Thank God for his beauty reflected in what he has made for you to see and enjoy.

Now bring to mind some part of nature that has been damaged or is slowly dying e.g. maybe you have seen a stream or river with piles of plastic floating on the surface, or you have seen on the TV the trees of the Amazon rainforest being burned down, or columns of fumes and smoke being pumped from tall chimneys into the atmosphere. Notice too, parents and children picking through rubbish to find something to eat, or young people digging in polluted areas of the ground in China, searching for precious metals to put into our precious mobile phones. Notice how it is the poor who suffer most from climate change and our neglect of the natural world.

Ask God your Father to help you see here what he sees. What are you aware of as you look at the damage caused? What are you feeling - sad, angry, guilty, helpless..... What might God be feeling.....

STEP 3.

I ask God my Father to help me see how my own life-style and decisions affect the gift of creation and the resources of the Earth.

Take a little time, to notice how you used your resources today or this week – consider food, packaging, tin cans, plastics, soap powder, water. Am I wasteful or do I throw things away without thinking?

How do I show that I care for creation? What can I do to help the most vulnerable people on the planet cope with the effects of climate change? What small change could I make? In the silence ask the Holy Spirit of Christ to guide you.

STEP 4.

I ask God my Father for forgiveness for the times when I have forgotten my responsibility to care for creation – for the times I have chosen my own convenience when it comes to my use of plastic, or told myself I’m too busy to protect the environment. For the times I have been careless when disposing of household goods and appliances or dumping rubbish. I ask forgiveness for the times I have taken the beauty of creation for granted – for not making time to enjoy the many gifts of the natural world.

STEP 5.

God calls us to be caretakers of the Earth. We are not simply to take the earth’s resources for our own benefit, but through caring for them to praise, reverence and serve God.

I ask God my Father to show me in my everyday life how to live with more respect for all living things. How might I live in friendship with God’s world and respect the good things of the earth? How can I live more simply and nurture my desire to grow in friendship with the earth? How can I reach out to support ecology projects in my local area that aim to protect wild life and plants while caring for the most vulnerable people on the planet? Could I grow some plants this Spring?

STEP 6.

As our time of prayer comes to a close, we give thanks to God for the gift of creation. We ask God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, to guide us in caring for creation and the most vulnerable among us. May all we do help heal the wounds inflicted on the face of the earth and the most needy peoples of all nations.

Let us pray,

Loving God and Creator of all that is good, you are present in the whole universe and in every creature. You embrace all that exists with your tender love. Move our hearts with your love to reach out and care for life and all its beauty. Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming

no one. Help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten people of this earth, who are so precious in your eyes.

Change the hearts of those who pollute and disfigure your beautiful creation. May they sow seeds of hope by making all living things grow.

Father we thank you for being with us each day. Encourage us in all we do for justice, love and peace in your world and our common home. Amen.

Fr. M. McGinnity 2021