

St Patrick Parish Creation Care Ministry: Lenten Reflections 2021

Feel free to share/reproduce these.

Mary Grace, Brenna, Claire, Denise, Dick, Kate, Brian, Judy

These weekly reflections/actions should be on the St Patrick website by Feb 21

<https://stpatrickbridge.org/creation-care/>

WEEK 1

Feb 20/21, 2021

WEBSITE VERSION

READINGS

Gn 9: 8-15

Ps 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9

1 Pt 3:18-22

Mk 1:12-15

THEME

Covenant with Every Living Being

REFLECTION

In the story of The Great Flood, God protects Noah and his family—along with “two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature”—from the destruction of 40 days and nights of torrential rains. As the flood waters recede and the soil begins to dry, God establishes a covenant with Noah’s family to start creation anew. This covenant is not, however, only with Noah and his family but with “everything alive around you—birds, farm animals, wild animals—that came out of the ship.” God enters into a promise with humans and all of creation so that “never again will every living thing be destroyed.”

Covenant is a two-way path. The promise is made by God and accepted by Noah. It is a covenant for all generations to come. God made the covenant with every living thing existing and that would exist in the future. Thousands of generations later, it is up to us to follow through on that covenant, for the sake of all creation, including humankind. God saved two of every kind of bird and animal so that they would repopulate Earth. The ecosystems of our waterways, animals, and plants know how to regenerate themselves. Our covenant with God necessitates that we get out of the way and allow nature to take its course.

Covenant means relationship: with God, with each other, with all of creation. Lent is a time to reflect on how we might have ruptured any of those relationships. It’s a time to repent and

ultimately renew. As Pope Francis said, "Our relationship with the environment can never be isolated from our relationship with others and with God" (Laudato Si' , para 119, 2015).

It is easy to despair, especially in times of uncertainty and disasters like climate shocks and a global health pandemic. But God gives us reminders of hope: "I'm putting my rainbow in the clouds, a sign of the covenant between me and the Earth." A simple, natural, bold-with-bright-colors, amazing-technicolor-dreamcoat-in-the-sky sign of hope. The rainbow.

"Look, look. Look to the rainbow. Follow it over the hill and the stream. Look, look. Look to the rainbow. Follow the fellow who follows a dream." (from Finian's Rainbow, 1947)

ACTION

Read about integral ecology <https://social-spirituality.net/integral-ecology/>

Connect with an organization working to protect Earth's land, air, waterways, and creatures for generations to come.

Green City/Blue Lake: <https://www.gcbl.org/>

The Hummingbird Project: <http://www.hummingbirdproject.org/>

Blue Planet Project: <http://www.blueplanetproject.net/>

Food First: <https://foodfirst.org/>

Land Trust Alliance: <https://www.landtrustalliance.org/>

Alliance for the Great Lakes <https://greatlakes.org/>

Friends of the Earth <https://foe.org/>

Indigenous Environmental Network <https://www.ienearth.org/>

Source used for inspiration for the reflection:

<https://ecospiritualityresources.files.wordpress.com/2020/08/creation.covenant.2021.pdf>

WEEK 2

February 27/28, 2021

WEBSITE VERSION

READINGS

Gn 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18

Rom 8:31b-34

Mk 9: 2-10

THEME

Sacrifice & Offerings

REFLECTION

As humans, we have the unique responsibility to care for God's creation. We are living in an unparalleled time where much is asked of us to care for it. In this week's readings, Abraham heard the call to sacrifice and offer his own son to God. Pope Francis asks us to "appeal to all people of goodwill to consider ways of living less wastefully and more frugally, manifesting less greed and more generosity for the protection of God's world and the benefit of His people" ('Common Declaration of Pope Francis and the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I,' par. 6, 2014).

Addressing climate change is crucial to responsibly caring for creation, and we now know that sacrifices are required on a personal, societal, and global scale to heed the call. We can sacrifice our own overconsumption, offer our attention to environmental justice issues, and appeal to those in power to care for creation. We can embrace the discomfort of sacrifice, and offer our resources mindfully and responsibly.

What have you been challenged to sacrifice/offer in our shared mission to care for God's creation? How can you embrace the discomfort of these challenges?

ACTION

Read the Earth Charter and reflect on how it calls you to sacrifice/offer:
<https://earthcharter.org/read-the-earth-charter/>

Refrain from eating meat this week, when possible. Recipe inspiration at:
theminimalistvegan.com

Take time to learn about an environmental justice issue in your community by visiting the Ohio Environmental Council (theoec.org)

Express appreciation for a community leader who works to care for God's creation. Learn more about local leaders at: www.sustainablecleveland.org

WEEK 3

March 6/7, 2021

WEBSITE VERSION

READINGS

Ex 20:1-17

1 Cor 1:22-25
John 2:13-25

THEME

Holiness and Respect

REFLECTION

Teilhard de Chardin said the world is in truth a holy place. God wants us to use this holy place appropriately. God gives us the Ten Commandments to guide us in doing this. Jesus saw the temple being used inappropriately and was angry. Do we use the resources God gave us in the way God wants us to? What about the way we use God's holy world might anger Christ today?

ACTION

1. Read Laudate Si and/or Fratelli Tutti.
2. Work on letting your yard or some spot of earth be pleasing to God or give glory to God.
3. Write a letter to a company that doesn't seem to use resources appropriately.
4. Do not waste any food.

WEEK 4

March 13/14, 2021

WEBSITE VERSION

READINGS

2 Chron 36:14-16, 19-23
Ps. 137:1-2, 3, 4-5, 6
Eph 2:4-10
Jn 3:14-21

THEME

Repent to Renew God's Sabbath Rest for Creation

REFLECTION

God's temple was a model of our Creation that was given to Israel as the place to remember, celebrate, and renew the covenant of peace that God began at the beginning. But like Israel's sins against its temple, our actions have polluted and corrupted our earth's creative and sustaining powers. Like the temple then, Pope Francis is warning us that our natural world is now burning. As a prophet the Pope proclaims God's direction for us to restore and protect our earth that is the dwelling place of God.

Our psalm this week is a lament describing how exiled Israel wept when it remembered that their abuses of God's covenant with the people and the land had damaged and alienated them from their natural home.

But we are assured that Christ Jesus can empower us in the church to reform us and redeem us to act effectively to transform our unsustainable lifestyle excesses. God's grace will strengthen our hope in our Savior's power to enlighten us to choose life for the Creation that we are called to care for and serve. With the light of Christ leading us our world and all God's people are called to have the eternal life that has begun on this earth and lifts us up to unite us and earth with God's heavens.

ACTION

1. Our Chronicles reading says that Israel's exile from their land happened so that creation can rest until it has "retrieved its lost sabbaths." What is a way that you can become more enlightened about specific destructive overuses of our earth's life force that help us lament and seek to repent so our earth can celebrate God's Sabbath rest.

2. What sustainable actions to repair and renew the earth's life can you practically implement that will demonstrate our response to God's gift of life and rest for the creation.

3. Reflect on God's use of water, oil, ashes, bread, wine, fire, incense, stone and glass, breath and voices, sound and silence, ears, raised hands, heads, and feet to touch us with the sacramental saving actions that reveal the presence of the divine in our physical world. Let this inspire our reverence and compassion for the earth that has suffered "lost sabbaths" and needs our efforts and restraint to gain a time of Sabbath rest.

WEEK 5

March 20/21, 2021

WEBSITE VERSION

READINGS

Jer 31:31-34

Heb 5:7-9

Jn 12:20-33

THEME

Responsibility and Renewal

REFLECTION

"....Yet what should I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'" It has already been a year when, in March, church doors closed, choirs were silenced, families were encouraged to stay apart, and normal human interaction suspended. Even the skies went silent for a while. And still the pandemic continues. Climate disasters in the form of destructive fires and storms continue to make refugees of citizens and zip codes continue to be determinants of life expectancies – inner city residents still suffer disproportionately due to health disparities, pollution, and a scarcity of green space. Forty percent of food is still being wasted, creating harmful methane gas which significantly contributes to global warming. Yet this is the hour we live in. Should we ask the question Jesus asked? Father, save me from this hour? Or, like Jesus, should we trust despite all circumstances and troubling feelings? These readings answer that question. In the midst of these challenges, God still blesses, still forgives. His glory still persists. The covenant of God's love, according to the prophesy of Jeremiah, is written on our hearts. That love is present in the air we have for ventilation, and the water we use to wash off vestiges of the virus. We have first responders, nurses, doctors, researchers, and innovators who have risen to their purpose, some even to the point of death. So, how will we glorify God's name by our actions? What is our responsibility? This is our hour. How can we protect and renew the earth and each other?

ACTION

1. Learn the difference between a linear economy and a circular economy. Visit sustainablecleveland.org
2. This week notice how much food you waste and why. Food waste accounts for the production of methane gas, a main contributor of greenhouse gases.
3. This week, ask God to show you one action you can take which manifests the covenant of love God has written on our hearts

WEEK 6

Mar 27/28, 2021 (Palm Sunday)

WEBSITE VERSION

READINGS

Isaiah 50:4-7

Philippians 2:6-11

Mark 14: 1-15:47

THEME

The Passion: The only way to resurrection

REFLECTION

"Not what I will but what you will." Christ acquiesced to the most extreme sacrifice, his life, for the sake of us. We, therefore, cannot deny the sacrifices we must make to gain Resurrection. We cannot avoid sacrifices to live fully and responsibly on this earth. We must embrace all that is asked of us. Remember we are not alone on this journey; we have this faith community to guide us and Christ resurrected.

ACTION

Attend Mass/services each day of the Triduum and do the following:

Holy Thursday

1. <https://www.ncronline.org/news/earthbeat/how-can-parishes-reduce-plastic-waste>

Go to this site to watch the video, Story of 3 Plastic Bottles.

Good Friday

2. <https://catholicclimatecovenant.org/resource/how-our-food-choices-can-save-planet>

How our food choices can save the planet. Watch video.

Holy Saturday

3. [https://www3.epa.gov/carbon-footprint-calculator/What is your carbon footprint?](https://www3.epa.gov/carbon-footprint-calculator/What%20is%20your%20carbon%20footprint?)