



Conversion to the Path of Gentleness with Earth

Leader: In the name of God, our Creator from whom all life comes,
in the name of Jesus the Christ, God's life among us
and in the name of their loving Spirit. Amen

All: **Holy! Holy! Holy! All creation is filled with God's presence.**

Leader: Christ Jesus, we gather in your name to worship in this home
of ours called Earth, a home which was also yours.

All: **Earth echoes God's presence, God's goodness and God's love.**

Leader: God, be with us in this place at this time and show us your love.

All: **Holy! Holy! Holy! All creation is filled with God's presence.**

Leader: We are gathered as the IHM family to pray for our conversion to the path
of gentleness with Earth. As a visible sign of our solidarity, we light
this candle representing our IHM presence in all of the places where
our sisters minister.

Song at the Center

Refrain



From the cor-ners of cre - a - tion to the cen - ter where we stand, Let all



things be blessed and ho - ly, all is fash - ioned by your hand; Broth - er



wind and sis - ter wa - ter, moth - er earth and fa - ther sky, Sa - cred



plants and sa - cred crea - tures, sa - cred peo - ple of the land.

First Reading:

Conversion is not a one-time happening in our lives. It is most often the beginning of a growth process that continues throughout the remainder of our lives. Such a conversion deepens, and at the same time, becomes more and more all embracing. Thus an initial conversion may be a call and a grace to a deeper prayer life which, in turn, opens us to a life of greater service. With the passage of time, as we continue to cooperate with God's continuing call, new gifts of integrity and truth become significant for us.

Thus it is that the relationship of the natural world to the goodness and wholeness of God and our sense of responsibility for the integrity of the environment become for many of us a broadening of our sense of conversion. We come to understand a fuller sense of who we are as responsible members of the web of life. The interconnectedness of all of reality takes on increasing significance.

We pray that as individuals and as a congregation and indeed, as the IHM family, we are coming to understand, in our minds and in our hearts, our need to care for the environment, to understand the dire consequences of global warming, and to make whatever lifestyle changes that we can to protect the integrity of our Earth and our cosmos for future generations. This is a conversion for each of us and for all of us together. And so we pray together:

**All: God of the sun and the moon
Of the mountains, deserts and plains
God of the mighty oceans, of rivers, lakes, and streams
God of all creatures that live in the seas and fly in the air
Of every living thing that grows and moves on this sacred Earth.**

**We are formed by Christ into your people,
Called to bring the world into your marvelous light,
As the Body of Christ, we are messengers of ecological vocation.
We are entrusted with caring for this Earth which you have created.**

**Help us to love and respect her
To repair what we have damaged
To care for what you have made good and holy.
Give us the wisdom and the passion
To change our minds and hearts and our ways.**

**Let us be mustard seeds in our world,
Bringing about ecological conversion which grows and spreads
to every corner of Earth.
For our sake now
And for every generation which is to come,
We ask this through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.**

- from Catholic Earthcare Launch, Brisbane, Australia



Second Reading:

We praise God for the beauty and interconnectedness of all of creation. Yet it is this same interconnectedness that cannot prevent the potential ecological catastrophe of global warming unless major changes are made in the way we use Earth's resources.

Scientists world-wide are warning us that the accumulation of greenhouse gases and the resultant heating of Earth's atmosphere have dire consequences. The three major components of greenhouse gases are carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide, all of which are increasing in the atmosphere. The most serious accumulation is probably that of carbon dioxide. The use of fossil fuels accounts for about 80 percent of the human-caused carbon emissions, and deforestation is responsible for the remaining 20 percent.

The consequences of global warming include coastal flooding as ice caps melt, harvests dropping by as much as 30 percent, migration and evacuation patterns changing. New stresses will be put on mountain and forest environments, and heat stress will be intensified and some species will not adapt. Disease patterns will change as tropical diseases have broader habitats. All of this is happening at a much faster pace than was first realized. Unfortunately, the consequences will inevitably be felt first and most severely in the world's poorest countries.

Our challenge is to be informed, to care and to respond in ways that we - as individuals and as a congregation - help to protect our environment and counteract trends of global warming. We ask God to help us to come to a personal and a corporate sense of responsibility and response.

Intercessions

Response: *Gracious God, enlighten us and give us courage to change.*

- + For an awareness of how our own life styles can be modified to help protect the environment, we pray:
- + For the openness to learn about environmental issues and concerns, we pray:
- + For an understanding and awareness of the connectedness of all of creation, we pray:
- + For an understanding of what it means to be gentle with Earth, we pray:
- + For the willingness to help each other to be environmentally sensitive, we pray:
- + For an awareness of the dangers to our planet from global warming, we pray:



Blessing: By Earth Be Blessed

Jan L. Richardson

May you know the embrace of Earth.

*May she teach you the wisdom of time:
the unfolding of spring
the ripening of summer
the turning of autumn
the shedding of winter.*

*May she teach you the wisdom of intimacy:
seed embraced by warm, dark soil
crevice traced by insistent stream
raindrop clinging to new, soft leaf
precious stones in hidden places.*

*May she teach you the wisdom of grace:
flowers entwining fallen oak
healing gifts of common weeds
grain for bread, fruit for wine
dancing stars through barren branches.*

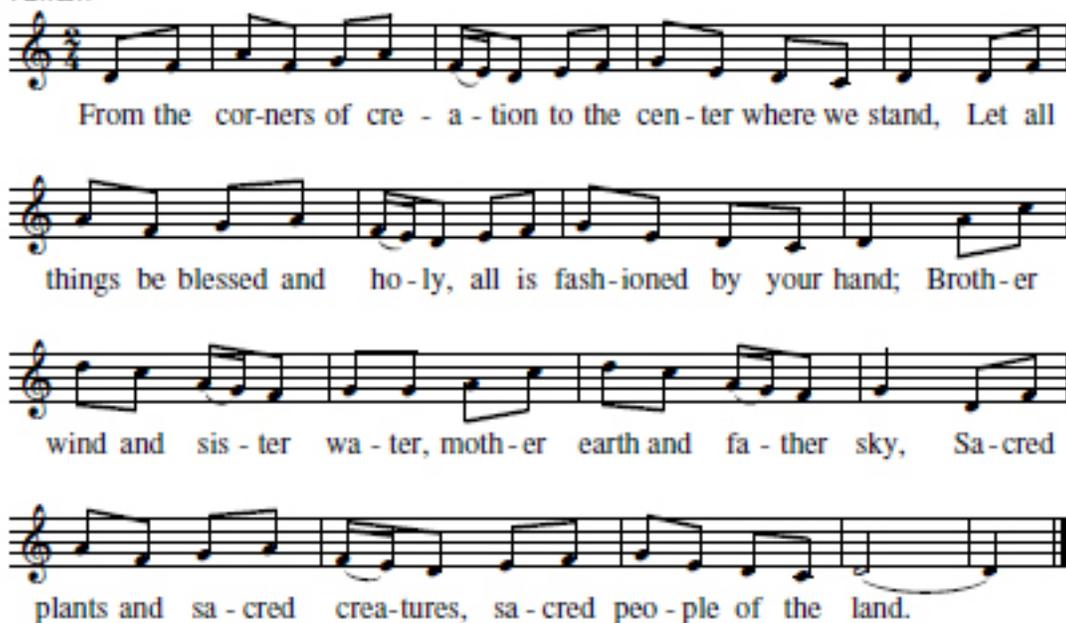
May you be known in Earth's embrace.

- from Sacred Journeys: A Woman's Book of Daily Prayer

Closing Prayer: All

God, help us to understand the moral significance of the environmental degradation of our Earth, especially the consequences of global warming. Help us to want and to be part of the undoing of this ecological disaster. We ask your help for the sake of ourselves, for our responsibilities to future generations and for the sake of Earth herself. Amen

Refrain



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wind and sis - ter wa - ter, moth - er earth and fa - ther sky, Sa - cred
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