



Earth Day Prayer Service
St. John Neumann
April 23, 2017



Opening

Let us come together to celebrate God's creation and commit ourselves to protecting the Earth. From ancient times humans have praised God as the Creator. Along with the gift of life, God expects humans to take responsibility for stewardship of all that is precious and life-giving.

Psalm 8

O Lord, our Lord, how awesome is your name
through all the earth!

You have set your majesty above the heavens! ...

When I see your heavens, the work of your hands,
The moon and stars that you set in place —

What are humans that you are mindful of them,
Mere mortals that you care for them?

Yet you have made them little less than a god,
crowned them with glory and honor.

You have given them rule over the works of your hands,
Put all things at their feet:

All sheep and oxen, even the beasts of the field,

The birds of the air, the fish of the sea,
And whatever swims the paths of the seas.

O Lord, our Lord, how awesome is your name through all the earth!



O Lord, we honor you and praise you for the gift of life and the awesome responsibility you have given us to be good stewards of this earth, our home. May we be ever mindful of the fragility and interconnectedness of all creation. Help us to be wise in our use of resources. Guide us to live so as to preserve the beauty and goodness of the earth for ourselves and for all generations to come. Amen.

Ritual of Hope

These trees will be planted on the parish grounds in celebration of Earth Day 2017. We plant them with a sense of hope. Someone else has planted the seeds with a sense of trust and hope that they would grow into young saplings. We now take over the responsibility of their care. We continue with a sense of hope that they will thrive on our property.

Imagine these trees in 10 years when they will be much bigger than any of us. What are some things that you hope will be true in 10 years for our parish, our families, our country or our world? Write your answers on these strips of paper and leave them in the pail with our planting soil. They will become a special fertilizer. These will be our seeds of hope that we also plant in our hearts today.

(Papers in bucket)

Litany of Gifts:

What are some gifts that these trees will give? We will respond, “we thank you Lord.”

For the gift of _____, we thank you, Lord.

What will these trees need to survive? We will respond, “we thank you Lord.”

For the gift of _____, we thank you, Lord.



Blessing:

We have been blessed with so much Lord. Bless these trees (sprinkle holy water) that they will grow strong and play a vital role in the myriad inter-relationships of this woodland habitat. Bless us also, (sprinkle holy water) that we will have the courage and humility to do your will and as St. Francis de Sales says to, “Be who we are and be that well.” Trees inherently do the will that you gave them; we on the other hand, have to **choose** to do your will. May we regard these trees and all of your creation with a kinship that reminds us that we are all created out of your love.

Sending Forth:

Together, let us end our time with a prayer inspired by Pope Francis and his encyclical, *Laudato Si'*:

God, Creator of All. Give us the awe to marvel at Your creation.

Give us the hearts that long for connection to the land, air and sea.

Give us minds that grasp the greatness of our task.

And give us the hope and joy that come with laboring alongside You in all that we do. Amen.



(Sources: Catholic Health Association of US, Marionists, USCCB)