

**Be present and aware of what are you identifying with in the earth's rhythm at this time.**

Imagine taking a walk with Jesus or Mary or another holy person.

You might dialogue with them about your walk in faith, service and justice.

In the spring and summer, consider:

- What in you has been planted, waiting to emerge?
- Where do you need hope and trust in new life?
- What new life or buds are you noticing?

In the autumn and winter, consider:

- What in you has come to fruition?
- For what harvest or abundance are you grateful?
- What do you need to let go of? What needs to die for new life to emerge?

**Allow the natural setting you choose to pray in to form your prayer** (e.g. the prairie, woods, forest, hill, meditation grove, garden, nursery, wetland, by a tree, etc.). Remain in the landscape for a period of time, and let the beauty, intricacy and mystery of the environment inspire you and draw your heart to the Sacred One. *"Be still and know that I am God"* - *Psalm 47: 10*

**Meditate.** Creation often opens us to the significant times in our life. For example, watching the leaves, buds and flowers emerge may remind you of the changes in your life and the promise of new life, love and growth – or draw you back to memories. Watching the wind blow through the grasses or new growth after the burn may inspire you to reflect on the strength and growth God has given you, and the beauty in our vulnerability and flexibility. *"I will meditate on all your work and muse on your mighty deeds."* -*Psalm 77:12*

**Draw a tree.** Let the tree symbolize yourself; for each part of the tree reflect on the following questions. Write your responses on that part of the tree.

- ROOTS: Who and what has given you nourishment and vitality in your life?  
Who and what "roots" you in the times of significant change?
- TRUNK: What are your strengths? What has channeled new life into you?
- LEAVES: What fresh growth from former seasons is emerging in you?  
How do you feel called to trust?
- BARK: Who or what protects you, comforts you?
- BUDS: What is your hope for the future?
- FLOWERS/FRUITS: What beauty and bounty has come to you?  
Who or what are you providing nourishment for?

**Scripture for Reflecting at Mount Saint John**

In the solitude. . .

Be still and know that I am God. *Psalm 47: 10*

For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from God. *Psalm 62: 5*

*With the trees. . .*

The righteous flourish the palm tree and grow like a cedar. They are planted in the house of the Lord. They flourish in the courts of our God. They still bring forth fruit in old age, they are ever full of sap and green. To show that God is upright; My rock, in whom there is no unrighteousness. *Ps 92: 12-15*

*With the wildflowers. . .*

Consider the lilies, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. *Luke 12:27*

*With the wetlands and pond. . .*

As a deer longs for flowing streams, so longs my soul for thee, O God.

My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. *Psalm 42: 1,2*

*With the prairie. . .*

Let the field exult, and everything in it. Then shall all the trees of the woods sing for joy before the Lord, who comes. *Psalm 96: 12*

*With the wildlife. . .*

Hide me in the shadow of your wings. *Psalm 17:8*

Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself

Where she may lay her young, at your altars, O lord of hosts. -*Psalm 84:3*

*With the sounds of creation. . .*

Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth;

Sing the Glory of God's name, give God glorious praise. *Psalm 66*

**For your thoughts and prayers**

- If the Psalmist, the prophets or Jesus lived in our region today, and spoke parables or prayers to you, what images in creation do you think they might choose as examples to teach us about God and living the gospel call to justice?
- Compose a prayer giving thanks to God for the diversity and wonder you have experienced in the ecosystems this season or today.
- What in creation has been a Blessing of God for you?
- How do you feel called to act to care for & protect all of Creation?

*But ask the animals, now, and they shall teach you; the birds of the sky, and they shall tell you. Or, speak to the earth, and it shall teach you. Ask the plants of the earth and they shall teach you. The fish of the sea shall declare to you. Who doesn't know that in all these, the hand of God has done this, in whose hand is the life of every living thing, and the breath of all humankind?* –Job 12:7-10

### **Prayer for our Harmony**

Mary, daughter of Wisdom

We, your family, are tired

We desire to be your living presence anew

*Form us as your rain*

Quenching parched souls with hope

*Form us as your fire*

Illuminating indifferent hearts with faith

*Form us as your wind*

Refreshing dusty minds with wisdom

*Form us as your soil*

Embracing all with compassion

In all these ways of life

Form us, so that

Your seed of justice sown deep within us

will flourish

Bearing abundant fruit

Of peace and integrity

*Joined together with all creation*

We will once again sing in harmony

# *Praying with Nature*

*Written and compiled by Leanne Jablonski FMI*

*"Then the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she would be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days ... Two wings of the great eagles were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and a half a time ... And the earth came to the help of the woman."*

*- Revelation 12:6, 14, 16*



Photo by Don Geiger

The natural world has long been a place for encountering God. The Hebrew scriptures are firmly rooted in the Holy Ground of God, who is known through earth, air, fire and water. From the praise of the Psalmist to the wonders proclaimed in the Wisdom texts, it is clear that creation is core to God's revelation. Our sacramental life relies on the symbols of the earth elements: the waters of Baptisms, the grapes and wheat of the Eucharist, the fire of the spirit of Confirmation. Indeed, as Catholics we believe in the sacramentality of all Creation and know we are interconnected with all life and dependent on the natural world.

As was Jesus and the prophets, we are drawn to stillness and solitude to foster a relationship with our God. This resource is designed to help the seeker listen and be attentive, develop a sense of awe and wonder, and respond in gratitude.

### **Marianist Environmental Education Center**

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