

## *Lent 2021: A Time of Gratitude*

This Lent EarthConnection is offering an opportunity to reflect and give thanks for all the beauty that surrounds us in our environment. This year has been a difficult one for everyone. The inability to gather and be with family and friends; the loss of those close to us has touched us deeply and there is deep mourning throughout the world. Yet God is in our midst each and every day if we only have eyes to see. You are invited to keep a Creation Care Journal jotting down each day a positive thought from your reflections. If you choose not to write, but simply reflect, that is fine also.

### Ash Wednesday

Remember that you are dust – star dust – made of the same stuff as all of creation!

### Week One

Find a spot outdoors or near a window where you can observe nature and sit undisturbed for at least 15 minutes. Do nothing but look at what is happening in that spot.

Notice the colors, not just green or yellow, red or orange, but how many shades of green? How many shades of yellow? What other colors are present?

**Thank God...**for the beauty of color in your life...for the vibrant reds and yellows and blues, for the softer lavenders, turquoise and mint greens, for the earth tones, the browns and beiges, the golds and grays. Think about the colors in your life at this moment in time. What are they? How can you express your gratitude to the Master Artist for the colors in your life?

### Week Two

What kind of trees do you see? Choose one and look at it carefully. What does the trunk look like? How large is it? Can your arms reach around it? Can you feel the texture? Is it rough or smooth? How are the branches formed? Are there leaves on the tree? What type of leaves? What shape are they? What colors are they? Why is this tree growing in this environment? What supports and nourishes it? What birds and other animals call it home?

**Thank God...**for the support and nourishment He constantly gives to you in your environment? What/Who is the source of support and nourishment in your life? Is fertilizer needed to make your environment more conducive to growth? What do you need to add to the soil of your life to make it more productive?

### Week Three

Are there flowers blooming in your spot? If yes, what colors are they? How are the petals formed? What insects are attracted to them? If the flowers are not blooming, think about the seeds or bulbs in the ground. What will they become when they emerge from the dark, moist soil?

**Thank God...**for the beauty of the flowers and the beauty in your own life. What/who are the things/persons of beauty in your life? How do you thank them for the joy they have given you? If you do not see the flowers, thank God for the seeds and bulbs which will emerge in the spring. Think about the seeds of possibility lying dormant within you. What is God calling you to be? How is God calling you to bring beauty into the world? Are you receiving the moisture and sunshine necessary to bloom? If not, what do you need to do?

#### Week Four

Notice an insect in your spot. It might be a brilliantly colored butterfly or a lowly ant. It does not matter. Just observe quietly. What does the insect look like? How is it shaped? What distinguishes it from other insects? What can it do? What is its food source? What does it bring to its environment? How is it suited to its environment?

**Thank God...**for the little things in life you take for granted and ask for the gift of knowing your place in the world as the ant and butterfly know theirs. What distinguishes you from others? How do your daily activities resonate with your inner being? Is there harmony and balance in your life?

#### Week Five

In her book titled *Did You Hear Wind Sing Your Name?*, Sandra De Coteau, an Oneida Indian writer, artisan, and educator, recounts her people's song of spring.

Traveling north did you see Spirit Hawk dancing on the wind?

Did you feel morning Sun's warmth upon your face welcoming you to a new day?

Did you smell the sweet scent of the sacred Cedar?

Did you hear wind sing your name? Does your memory bring sweet grass's fragrance?

Did you taste the thunderer's moist sky waters? Were you healed by meadow's wild strawberries?

Adapting Ms. De Coteau Orié's pattern, use your senses to appreciate the nature around you. Take a walk, sit in a scenic spot, or look out your window and experience nature through all your senses. Give thanks to the Creator who has so gifted you with such wonders all around you.

I see...I feel...I smell...I hear...I taste...

#### Week Six

As we come to the end of Lent, let us remember all the beauty we have discovered these past weeks and pray daily in union with each other this prayer from Laudato Si':

"All powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with tenderness all that exists...Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction...Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light."

#### Easter Sunday

*Rejoice and Be Glad! He is Risen!*

EarthConnection, 370 Neeb Road, Cincinnati, Ohio 45233, 513-451-3932

[www.scearthconnection.org](http://www.scearthconnection.org)