

# CREATION COMMUNION

## Introduction

Saint Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home, this earth, is like a sister with whom we share our life. This earth is a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us.<sup>1</sup>

Our most sacred act is a sharing of the earth from a Creator who is Soil, Wind, Underground Stream, and Fire. And our mythology tells us that we, humans, were created from fertile soil<sup>2</sup> (*adamah*) and holy breath (*ruach*).

In the book of Job, God reminds Job in his long-suffering that he is not the center of all things. God reminds him that he is small and part of something very large and beautiful and that should be enough.

We become most human when we don't put ourselves at the center of everything.<sup>3</sup>

## The Story of God

One: God is the fiery life of Divine Essence. God is aflame beyond the beauty of the meadows. God gleams in the waters and burns in the sun, the moon, and the stars.<sup>4</sup>

**All: All living creatures are sparks from the radiation of God's brilliance, and these sparks emerge from God like the rays of the sun.**

One: But if God did not give off those sparks, how would the divine glory become fully visible?

**All: For there is no creature without some kind of radiance - whether it be greenness, seeds, buds, or another kind of beauty.<sup>5</sup>**

One: I, the highest and fiery power, have kindled every spark of life. I, the fiery life of divine essence, am aflame beyond the beauty of the meadows, I gleam in the waters, and I burn in the sun, moon, and stars. With every breeze, as with invisible life that contains everything, I awaken everything to life.

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<sup>1</sup> From the Papal Encyclical

<sup>2</sup> Ellen Davis

<sup>3</sup> Bill McKibben

<sup>4</sup> Hildegard of Bingen

<sup>5</sup> Hildegard of Bingen (4.11)

**All:** The air lives by turning green and being in bloom. The waters flow as if they were alive. The sun lives in its light, and the moon is enkindled, after its disappearance, once again by the light of the sun so that the moon is again revived.

One: And thus I remain hidden in every kind of reality as a fiery power. Everything burns because of me in the way our breath constantly moves us, like the wind-tossed flame in a fire.<sup>6</sup>

### **Invitation**

One: Let us gather around the table to remember our spiritual roots in Christ and to tap into the strong sap of the Holy Spirit. We have been waiting, O God, for this meal as we wait for so much.

**All:** We come to the joyful feast hungry for blessing and thirsting for peace—peace across our planet in our homes, in our churches, and in our hearts. Struggling to be patient, we wait. But we know. Hope doesn't come from calculating whether the good news is winning out over the bad. It's simply a choice to take action.<sup>7</sup>

### **Communion Hymn**

*Touch the Earth Lightly*

NCH, #569

*(For Lent it might be appropriate to break this hymn up with the first two reflective and repentant verses sung in communion as a way of expressing solidarity in sorrow. The remaining two verses might then be sung as the Closing Hymn in hope of our solidarity in celebration.)*

### **Communion Prayer of Challenge and Consecration**

One: Author of creation, we are a mere piece in nature's puzzle, but we act as if it is ours for the taking. If we listen, we can hear your creation groaning in agony and crisis. If we look, we can see the dire effects of our carbon addictions and deforestation. If we search, we can find heaps of our toxic waste being dumped among the world's poor. Through our sins, daily and systemic, we estrange ourselves from you and the rest of creation.

**All:** O God of all kindness, your gracious gifts demand a responsibility that we all too often neglect. We confess that we have held you at a distance, resisting and ignoring your will in our lives. We have denied your goodness in each other, in ourselves, and in this world you have created. We use your beautiful world for

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<sup>6</sup> Hildegard of Bingen (Vision 1:2)

<sup>7</sup> Anna Lappe'

**our selfish gain and forget to see you in it. We throw creation away day after day. We repent of the evils and oppression we participate in, knowingly, half-knowingly, and unknowingly. Holy One, forgive us.<sup>8</sup>**

One: So with unimaginable threats to God's good earth on the horizon, we celebrate what hope looks like—to do the unreasonable thing, the courageous thing. With countless lives on the line, in the sharing of these basic elements in neighborliness, this is what love looks like.<sup>9</sup>

**All: We must hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.<sup>10</sup>**

One: Gracious God, forgive, restore, and strengthen us through Jesus Christ.

**All: Guide us by your creative Spirit into more faithful lives of grace, solidarity, and commitment to love and justice. Let us live our vocation to be protector of your handiwork.<sup>11</sup> Amen.**

### **The Elements**

Our most sacred meal is a sharing of the earth--bread, a mixture of earth, seed, sunlight, water, and the kneading of human hands. In the sharing of the earth, may we know ourselves to be a part of something very large and beautiful.

*(Distribution of the bread)*

Take and eat. May the earth once again feed and nurture you.

Our most sacred meal is a sharing of the soil--grape, a mixture of soil, vine, sunlight, necessary pruning, and the right amount of pressure and time. In the sharing of this soil, may we know ourselves to be a part of something very large and beautiful.

*(Distribution of the grape)*

Take and drink. May the soil once again quench our thirst for justice and righteousness.

From this holy meal, we remember that the earth is our bones, the body, that gives form and content to our breathing, our walking, our dancing, and our celebration.

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<sup>8</sup> Rev. Dr. Rochelle Stackhouse

<sup>9</sup> Tim DeChristopher

<sup>10</sup> Papal Encyclical

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

### **\*Prayer of Thanksgiving**

This bread we have eaten comes from the earth. The wine we have tasted comes from the soil. Thank you, God, for sharing it all. Help us to lend our voice in caring for Earth. Help us to see the birds of the air, the fish of the water, the plants and animals that live with us as part of our communion in your love. In Christ's name, we ask it. Amen.<sup>12</sup>

### **\*Passing of the Peace**

Hear these words, a 2000 year old quote from a Jewish rabbi,

*The day is short,*

*the task is abundant,*

*the laborers are lazy,*

*the wages are great,*

*and the Master of the house is insistent.*

*It is not up to you to finish the task, but neither are you free to desist from it.*<sup>13</sup>

And we will only finish this task through our spiritual practices of neighborliness and community. Let us begin to practice by passing the peace of Christ to one another. Amen.

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<sup>12</sup> Rev. Richard Bott

<sup>13</sup> Bill McKibben