

Prayer For Creation

A home for all?

Renewing the Oikos of God



Greeting

We gather in the name of God,
Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer of the Earth and all its creatures!

All: Praise be to the Holy Trinity! God is sound and life, Creator of the Universe, Source of all life, whom the angels sing; wondrous Light of all mysteries known or unknown to humankind, and life that lives in all.

(Hildegard of Bingen, 13th Century)

We greet each friend in the name of Jesus,
born of Mary and child of Joseph,
grandchild of Heli, who was the 40th-great-grandchild of David,
child of Jesse, grandchild of Ruth and Boaz who was, by Rahab then Tamar,
the seventh grandson of Judah, child of Jacob, child of Rebecca and Isaac,
child of Sarah and Abraham, descendant of Noah,
great-grandchild of Enoch who walked with God,
the 4th-great-grandchild of Eve and Adam,
human children of the Earth and the Creator.

And who are you, friend?

We invite you to reflect on your ancestors or the meaning of your name.

Will you bring your full self to sit at the feet of the creator?

All: I bring my full self to sit at the feet of the creator.

We gather in the name of the one born in Bethlehem,
who lived as a refugee in Egypt, and who was raised in Nazareth near the Sea of
Galilee that feeds the Jordan River.

We welcome you from your home. Where is home for you?

*We invite you to reflect on your place of origin and your local ecology,
how do you describe your home?
What does home mean to you?*

Will you offer your home as a space for God to dwell in?

All: I offer my home as a space for God to dwell in.

From the places we call home, we are gathered in the name of God, Creator,
Redeemer, and Sustainer of each creature and the Earth,

All: that is our common home.



Song - Home:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YXiAxm2YcPI>

The Word

God saw everything that he had made, and indeed it was very good. **Genesis 1.31**
For the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Pause

O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. **Psalms 104. 26**
For the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Pause

In Christ all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible- all things have been created through him and for him. **Colossians 1.16**
For the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Pause

You are worthy, our Lord and God to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created. **Revelation 4.11**
For the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**



Hymn: This is my Father's world
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C9g-uidS6wE>

A Litany of Thanksgiving

Let us give thanks to God, saying 'we thank you, Lord'.

For the beauty and wonder of creation,
We thank you, Lord.

For all that is gracious in the lives of men and women.
We thank you, Lord.

For daily food, for homes and families and friends,
We thank you, Lord.

For minds to think, hearts to love, and imagination to wonder,
We thank you, Lord.

For health, strength, and skill to work, and for leisure to rest and play.
We thank you, Lord.

For patience in suffering, for courage and faithfulness in difficult times.
We thank you, Lord.

For all who pursue justice and truth,
We thank you, Lord.

Today we give thanks especially for this opportunity to celebrate Creation Sunday in this beautiful contemplative service together, for this peaceful time to reflect on the awesome wonder of our world, and for the many miracles in nature that we get to experience every single day if we take a breath and still ourselves,
We thank you, Lord.

And finally for all the saints whose lives have reflected the light of Christ,
We thank you, Lord. AMEN



Hymn -For the beauty of the Earth
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bIg7usVkDI>

Thanksgiving for the Earth

Creator, the strength of all creatures, we honour you.
Listen to the thoughts of your people.

We honour your Spirit who renews the world and calls us to care for your creation
to the East, to the South, to the West and to the North.

We live by the ways you have entrusted to us within the circle of life. Come Great
Spirit as we gather in your name.

*(We turn our bodies to the Four Directions as we pray the following prayers. Begin
by turning toward the East and continue to turn, in a clockwise direction)*

We face East:

The place of dawning, there is beauty in the morning, there the seeker finds new visions as each sacred day is born. All who honor life around them, all who honor life within, shall shine with light and glory when the morning comes again. And we pray,
Come Holy Spirit, Come

We turn to the South:

In the South, the place of growing, there is wisdom in the earth, Both the painful song of dying and joyful song of birth. As the Earth gives up her lifeblood so that her Childrens' hearts may beat, so we give back to her our reverence for the holy ground beneath our feet. And we pray,
Come Holy Spirit, Come

We turn to the West:

The place of seeing, there is born a vision of the servant of the servants, who proclaimed the Gospel to us. Guide us at the end of each day and fill us with your peace. And we pray,
Come Holy Spirit, Come

We turn to the North:

We look to God our Creator who cleanses our earth with snow, wind, and rain. To Jesus who fills us with the wideness of mercy and grace and lovingly embraces all the people. And the Holy Spirit who comes to inspire us. And we pray,
Come Holy Spirit, Come



Psalm 24 -
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U-ZfKMaPJmc>

Lament

"Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with coloured flowers and herbs".

With these words, Saint Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us.

This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her...This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she "groans in childbirth" (Rom 8:22). And so we confess.

(adapted from Laudato Si')

Jesus Christ could not find a place to lay his head. Because of our will to dominate, millions of our human family are displaced from their homes. Many lack access to clean water, sanitation and dignified places for personal hygiene.

Have mercy on us, for the sake of the Earth and all that is in it.

Foxes of the field and birds of the air have a place to call home. Because we misuse the land, the soil, water and air, habitats are desecrated, and millions of species no longer have a home.

Have mercy on us, for the sake of the Earth and all that is in it.

Your promise was to be a blessing for all the peoples of the Earth. But when we exploit the gifts of creation, Indigenous lands are devastated and those who live close to the Earth lose their ways of life.

Have mercy on us, for the sake of the Earth and all that is in it.

The mustard seed is great because it provides shelter for many. But we seek security for ourselves, instead of mutual care and faithful hospitality towards our co-creatures.

Have mercy on us, for the sake of the Earth and all that is in it.

Let us remember "that we ourselves are dust of the earth" (cf. Gen 2:7); our very bodies are made of her elements, we breathe her sacred air and we receive life and refreshment from her sacred waters. May we hear it as a promise and a calling.

Turn us O God, from our desire to unroot ourselves from our home in the garden, and from our will to dominate your Earth. Call us again, to till and to keep. Gather us into the power of just relationships that heal and sustain. Enlighten us by your Spirit that renews the face of your Earth and safeguards a home for all. Amen.



Hymn - Look at the world:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kxr8QBPq1z0>

Confession and absolution

We confess to you our lack of care for the world you have given us.
Lord have mercy,
Lord have mercy.

We confess to you our selfishness in not sharing the earth's bounty fairly.
Christ have mercy,
Christ have mercy

We confess to you our failure to protect resources for others,
Lord have mercy,
Lord have mercy.

May God who loved the world so much that he sent his Son to be our Saviour
forgive us our sins and make us holy to serve him in the world, through Jesus
Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Profession of faith

We belong to the Creator in whose image we are all made.

In God we are breathing, in God we are living, in God we share the life of all creation.

We belong to Jesus Christ, the true icon of God and of humanity.

In him God is breathing, in him God is living, through him we are reconciled.

We belong to the Holy Spirit, who gives us new life and strengthens our faith.

In the Spirit love is breathing, in the Spirit truth is living, the breath of God always moves us.

We belong to the Holy Trinity, who is one in all and Three-in-One.

In God we are all made, in Christ we are all saved, in the Spirit we are all united.

Together, we belong to the Earth, our common home.

The Earth that is the Lord's, and all that is in it.



Creation Calls:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=28sqs5H5hao>

Earth Examen

An examen is a way of beholding an object or being in prayerful wonder.
Through questions, you are invited to reflect on God's presence and the goodness of that which you behold.
During this Season of Creation, consider contemplating a part of your local ecology.
Enter into prayer in whatever way is natural to you.
Invite Holy Wisdom to open the eyes of your heart.
Together we reflect on the following questions:

1. Become aware of God's presence in a natural or agricultural place that you are contemplating.

How is God present in this place?
How does all the life you see exist in God's spirit?
How do you feel knowing that the Holy Spirit has filled this place for geological ages, with every plant, animal, organism and mineral that has called this place home in the deep past, makes its home here with you now, and will live here with creatures in this place in the future?
How do you feel knowing that you, earthling, belong to this place, are made of the same carbon, breathe the same air, are nurtured by the same cycles and life processes, and are enlivened by the same Spirit of the Creator?

2. Reflect on the ecological cycles of this place with gratitude for all that it provides.

What nutrient cycles are supported by this place?

Is this a watershed that filters water?

Is this a rainforest (tropical or deciduous) that fixes nutrients?

Is this a meadow or field that fixes nitrogen?

Is this a green space that absorbs CO₂ and cleans the air?

What plants, animals, microbes and minerals are sheltered here?

How do they serve the whole earth in their being?

For all that this place provides to nurture you and all that belong to this place, let a feeling of gratitude fill you.

3. Pay attention to what you feel as you contemplate the fragility, health of this site.

Is this ecosystem healthy?

How is this ecosystem at risk of illness?

What are the keys to sustaining the equilibrium and balance of this place?

What niches and diversity must be protected to maintain the health of this habitat?

What are the sources of stress that threaten the balance of this particular ecosystem?

Do those stresses drive your co-creatures from their home in this place?

How do you feel when you consider the fragility of life that depends on the health of this place?

What is your effect on this balance?



4. Choose one feature of the site and pray for it, its rest and its renewal.

When you consider the ways that this place is under stress, what does it need for rest, restoration and renewal?

What needs to be conserved for this site to heal itself?

What features need to be reclaimed?

What parts of creation need to be restored to their rightful home here?

Pray for this site, and the wisdom to care for it.

5. Look toward your response. What can you do to ease demands or promote the rest of this ecological site?

Based on your examination, how do you identify with this place?

What have you discerned is required to care for this place?

What will be your act of compassion to promote rest for this common home?



Lingering in Nature — Richard Rohr's Daily Meditations

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V8ng0DgQOjs>

Intercessory Prayers

Whenever we join together, we should give thanks. So let us join our hearts and minds together and think of all creation and the Creator's gifts.

Loving God.

We give our thanks.

Let us think of our Mother, the Earth, upon whom we walk and who supports us and nurtures life in all its forms. We think of the minerals, the fungi, and bacteria that give life to soil, bodies and systems. We pray we can learn to walk on Earth with more respect.

Loving God.

We give our thanks.

Let us think of the reasons why we are gathered. For this place in which we gather, and for all of the animals and plants that call this place home.

Loving God.

We give our thanks.

Let us think of the whole human family whose livelihood and well-being depends on the well-being of the Earth. We lift up the men, women and children who are displaced from their homes.

Loving God.

We give our thanks.

Let us turn our minds to the sacred waters of the world, the great oceans, aquifers, lakes, rivers and streams, the life that lives in the waters and those that give itself to be our food.

Loving God.

We give our thanks.



Let us now turn our thoughts to the plant life of the Creator's world. That which is below ground; the roots and vegetables.

That which puts just its head above the ground: the grasses, medicines, plants and bushes.

All of the many kinds of good fruit the Creator has given us.

And finally, the great trees of the forest that we know of as the "Standing Ones."
Loving God.

We give our thanks.

Let us think of all our kindred animals, those that crawl, walk, swim and fly.

We give thanks for those that provide food for us, those that sustain cycles in their work and living, those that provide companionship and beauty.

Loving God.

We give our thanks.

Let us think of the birds of the air. The feathered ones that are the messengers between us and the Creator.

Loving God.

We give our thanks.

Let us think of the relationships that sustain life in this beloved community. We think of the "Three Sisters," corn, beans and squash who nurture, guard and sustain as they grow together. These relationships are gifts from the Creator and our sustenance.

Loving God.

We give our thanks.

Creator God, look upon the creatures gathered here together and send us where you would have us go, so that we may embody the ministry of justice for your Creation through our being and acts. Walk with us so that we may face the winds of change and walk the good road. Protect and renew our common home.

Enlighten us.

Sustain us.

May God our Creator be with us this day and always.

Amen.

(Adapted from Celebrating Creation: Honoring Indigenous People, Kelly Sherman-Conroy, ELCA)

Lord's Prayer

We pray our common prayer that Christ taught us.
All: Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be,
Father and Mother of us all, Loving God, in whom is heaven:
The hallowing of your name echoes through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
Your beloved community of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on
earth.
With the bread we need for today, feed us. In the hurts we absorb from one
another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever. Amen.

(Adapted from The New Zealand Book of Prayer | He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa. This version of the Lord's prayer was influenced by Maori theologians)

Visio Divina

1. Study the picture slowly, taking a first glance noting the colours, people, places and things. Remain with the image for one to two minutes.

2. Take a second, deeper, look. Where is there movement? What relationships do you see? Engage your imagination. Where are you in the artwork? What do you see from that perspective? What deeper meaning emerges?

3. Respond to the image with prayer. Did the image remind you of an experience, person or issue for which you'd like to offer thanksgiving or intercession? In what way does God's promise change, or not change how you visualize your relationship with the earth, each other, and God? Offer your thoughts as prayer to God.

4. Find your quiet center. Breathe deeply. Relax your shoulders, arms and legs. Rest in this quiet. Let God pray in you. God prays beyond words.





So Will I

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C2U7ffUM5Ec>

Benediction

May God who established the dance of creation,
Who marvelled at the lilies of the field,
Who transforms chaos to order,
Lead us to transform our lives and the Church
To reflect God's glory in creation.

(CTBI Eco-Congregation Programme)

Closing Prayers

Come, O Spirit of God, and make within us your dwelling place and home.
May our darkness be dispelled by your light, and our troubles calmed by your
peace;

may all evil be redeemed by your love,
all pain transformed through the suffering of Christ,
and all dying glorified by his risen life. **Amen.**

Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised:
there is no end to his greatness.

One generation shall praise your works to another,
and shall declare your power.

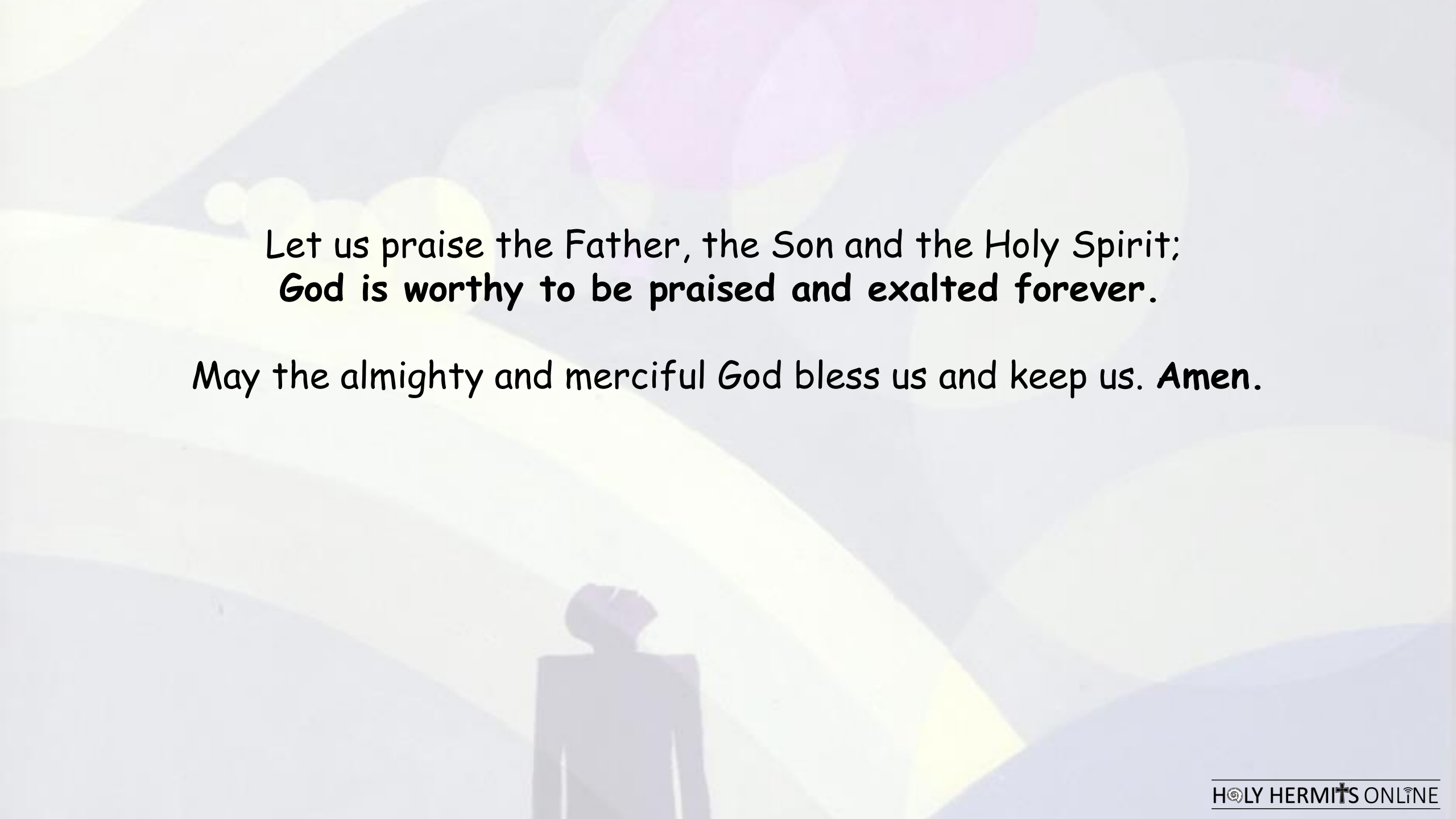
All creation praises you, Lord, and your faithful servants bless you.
They declare the glory of your kingdom and tell of your mighty power.

My mouth shall proclaim the praise of the Lord.
Let every living thing bless his holy name for ever and ever.

The doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise him, all creatures here below,
Praise him above ye heavenly host, Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Amen.

The background features a soft, abstract illustration. At the bottom, a silhouette of a person stands with their head tilted back in prayer. Above them, a vibrant rainbow arches across the sky, set against a backdrop of light, fluffy clouds. The overall color palette is gentle, with pastel pinks, purples, and blues.

Let us praise the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit;
God is worthy to be praised and exalted forever.

May the almighty and merciful God bless us and keep us. **Amen.**



Aaron Douglas (American, 1899-1979), *The Creation*, 1935. Oil on Masonite. Howard University Gallery of Art, Washington, DC

Closing music:

Alone With GOD

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fOB73qRVGJs>

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<https://holyhermits.com.au/give>

Look out for the next contemplative services
on 3rd October celebrating St Therese of Lisieux
and 31st October for All Hallows, All Saints and All Souls