

Five weeks • Five reflections • two minutes

# ROOT

Dawna Wall

Poet, Mary Oliver writes:

“When I am among the trees,  
especially the willows and the honey locust,  
equally the beech, the oaks and the pines,  
they give off such hints of gladness.  
I would almost say that they save me, and daily.”

Trees safeguard us in body, mind, soul and spirit; offering oxygen, storing carbon, stabilizing the earth, and us. Trees help us move us closer to some sort of hope for ourselves and a world where we might, as the poem continues, walk slowly, bow often and shine.

We are surrounded and held by beauty; rooted and grounded in the ancient and new, tender seedlings and majestic giants—firs, garry oaks, cottonwood, redwood, arbutus, fruit trees and deciduous, evergreen and acorn; all part of the wondrous, amazing mix of life, death and resurrection.

Forest ecologist, Suzanne Simard writes, “...nothing lives on our planet without death and decay. From this springs new life, and from this birth will come new death. This spiral of living taught me to become a sower of seeds too, a planter of seedlings, a keeper of saplings, a part of the cycle.”

And so, we pray and breathe deeply and give thanks for the trees that daily save us, hoping we might find a way to save them, too.

The trees bear witness to the joy of new growth, the anguish of death, the rebirth that can happen in so many surprising ways, the evolution of a faith that has a propensity for greening.

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A close-up photograph of a hand pouring water from a pinkish-red container onto a small, vibrant green seedling. The seedling is growing out of dark, cracked earth. The background is softly blurred, showing more of the soil and some distant greenery. The overall lighting is warm and natural, suggesting an outdoor setting.

In *Braiding Sweetgrass*, Robin Wall Kimmerer writes, “Even a wounded world is feeding us. Even a wounded world holds us, giving us moments of wonder and joy. I choose joy over despair. Not because I have my head in the sand, but because joy is what the earth gives me daily and I must return the gift.”

So, with all creation, may we go out with joy and be led forth in peace, as the mountains and hills sing of God’s glory, and the trees, the marvelous beautiful, diverse and variegated trees, clap their hands.

## **About the speaker**

Dawna Wall finds solace among the trees, her faithful prayer companions in each place she’s lived. She is a priest, writer and retreat leader, currently serving at St Michael and All Angels, Royal Oak, as archdeacon of Selkirk and adjunct professor at the Vancouver School of Theology.