

Advent 2024

*God said, "I love you,"
And said it so profoundly
That the Word became matter.*

Sunday, 1st December

*"Put breath into us,
and we will
worship you."*

Ps80:18

"Earth's crammed with
heaven,
And every common
bush afire with God,
But only he who sees
takes off his shoes;
The rest sit round and
pluck blackberries."

— Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Notice and be thankful
for all the life around you.
Begin to name for
yourself your relationship
with all of creation.
What does that
relationship mean for
you?
How comfortable are you
as we begin this journey
through Advent?

Monday, 2nd December

*The messenger you
desire is coming
with my promise,
and he is on his
way.* Mal 3:1

Have you ever thought about how the moment of conception changed many things for Mary? She could no longer think of her needs alone. She had someone else to think about.

Compliment a stranger today.
Write a thank you note to someone who has changed your insight, understanding, or perception in the last month.
Is there a call to you to think about someone 'new'?

Tuesday, 3rd December

"We lack an awareness of our common origin, of our mutual belonging, and of a future to be shared by everyone ... A great cultural, spiritual and educational challenge stands before us,..." Laudate Si #202

How open am I to seeing in a new way planet earth...indeed our universe, with all it holds?

Click onto this link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nbDQEo0uA0Q> to see some of the discoveries of the James Webb Telescope from its First Year in Space

Wednesday, 4th December

*"Matter matters to
God".* Ilia Delio

"The nitrogen in our DNA, the calcium in our teeth, the iron in our blood, the carbon in our apple pies were made in the interiors of collapsing stars. We are made of starstuff."
— Carl Sagan, Cosmos

It has been said that every atom in your body came from a star that exploded. And, the atoms in your left hand probably came from a different star than your right hand.

Write on a post-it note write: "You are not ordinary, You are born of starstuff." Put it on your mirror.

Thursday, 5th December

*You are the universe
experiencing itself"*

Allan Watts

*"...the universe, by
definition, is a
single gorgeous
celebratory event."*

Thomas Berry

"We shall not cease from
exploration
And the end of all our
exploring
Will be to arrive where we
started
And know the place for the
first time." T.S. Eliot

As day turns to night,
take a moment to sit or
stand, gaze to the sky,
see the stars if you can.
Let yourself be conscious
of the greater space of
our universe, and where
you are in it.

Friday 6th December

*"In his hand is the
life of every living
thing
and the breath of
every human
being."*

Job 12: 9,10

"If the science tells us we
come from the
same source, the extinction
of species is the
extinction of another mode
of divine presence"

John Feehan and Thomas Berry

Google

"Australia's/Philippines/Ja
pan/Pacific endangered
species" and become
familiar with some of the
plants and animals that
are most vulnerable to
extinction now.

Saturday, 7th December

*"Ask the plants of
the earth, they will
teach*

you." Job 12: 8

*Nature reveals one
long truth: life seeks
more life. Nature has
an intrinsic capacity
for life because God,
who is life itself, is at
the heart of nature.*

Ilia Delio

Have you ever thought the flowers in the garden are there not just for you and for me, but are there for the benefit of insects?

Spend some time looking into a flower. You may be able to see the drops of nectar deep in the flower. This is what attracts insects. Flowers are coloured, have markings, and are shaped so as to guide the insect to collect the nectar. In seeking the nectar, the insect gets covered with pollen, flies to the next flower and thus pollinates that flower for the life cycle of the plant to continue.

Sunday, 8th December

*You surely know
that your body is a
temple where the
Holy Spirit lives. The
Spirit is in you and
is a gift from God.
You are no longer
your own.*

1Cor:6:19

"Irenaeus of Lyon (2nd Century) says that the cosmos, Earth, all things were created out of the very substance of God. This stuff, the stuff of the human body, is sacred stuff. How we handle one another in relationships ... are sacred matters. How we handle the matter of the body of Earth, with reverence, and justly and equitably, are sacred matters."
John Philip Newell

Write yourself a letter, a poem, make a collage, about the gift of your body and the Spirit who has its home in you.

Monday, 9th December

*But ask the animals,
and they will teach
you;
the birds of the air,
and they will tell
you;*

Job 12: 7

"In this life we cannot see
God's substance, but
know him only from creatures",
Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica,
Part 1a.

If you have a pet, spend
time with it.

OR

Go for a walk. Choose an
animal or bird, big or small.
Spend time in relationship
with animal or bird. Perhaps
have a conversation with it.

Tuesday 10th December

*And do you have any
idea how large this earth
is?*

*Do you know where
Light comes from and
where Darkness lives....
Have you ever travelled
to where snow is made,
seen the vault where hail
is stockpiled,
can you find your way
to where lightning is
launched, or to the place
from which the wind
blows?* Job 38

Modern science has been telling us, in so many ways, that mind and matter are part of the same cosmic stuff. The recent images of the early universe affirm what we have known for over a century, nature is an unbearable wholeness of magnificent life.
Ilia Delio

Watch and listen to Canticale of Creation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g8Xz4u5jpXE>

OR

All things bright and beautiful

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cXFCZQDqlQ8>

OR

Read the full chapter of Job 38.

Wednesday 1st December

*In the beginning
God created the
heavens and the
earth. The Spirit of
God was moving over
the water.*

*God said, "I
command the water
under the sky to
come together in one
place, so there will be
dry ground." And
that's what happened.*

Gen 1

Water might not be the first thing that comes to mind when we think of God's good gifts to us. But water is so well designed for our use that a seemingly simple glass of the clear liquid should cause us to recognize the fingerprint of the Creator.

Author unknown

Read about the Water Gift, a charitable organization that provides safe drinking water to those in our world who don't have access to it.

<https://thewatergift.org>

and similar organisations.

Monitor your use of water for the next 5 days.

How wisely did you use water?

Thursday 12th December

At once God's Spirit made Jesus go into the desert. He stayed there for 40 days while he was tested. Jesus was with the wild animals, but angels took care of him. Mk 1:12

People often reject science because of their beliefs, attitudes and values. When scientific information contradicts what people believe is true or good, they are tempted to dismiss the information, to feel uncomfortable. They resolve this discomfort by simply rejecting the science.

Aviva Philipp-Muller

People find different news sources credible depending on their values, experience, and viewpoint. Media in general, and social media in particular, often use customized news feeds that promote and support particular viewpoints. Listen carefully to the news in the coming 24hrs. Can you pick up the particular viewpoints being promoted?

Friday 13th December

*God fills the sky with
clouds*

*and sends rain to the
earth,*

*so that the hills will be
green with grass.*

*He provides food for
cattle and for the young
ravens, when they cry
out.*

*God lets you live in
peace, and he gives you
the very best wheat.*

Ps147:8,9,14

"Every breath of air we take,
every mouthful of food that we
take, comes from the natural
world. And if we damage the
natural world, we damage
ourselves."

– Sir David Attenborough

As you prepare your
shopping list for Christmas,
Try these questions:
Can I do it healthier?
Do I need all of this?
How can I store this so that
it keeps?
Am I supporting local
producers?
Is there anything to share or
give away on my list?

Saturday, 14th December

Just as the progress of scientific understanding of how creation actually works has transformed the way we see the cosmos, and our human understanding of the fabric of reality: so too, ...it has transformed our appreciation of what God is about, of how God is at work in the world.

John Feehan

Our Land is as sacred as yourself, as a person like you are. And always, you treat the Land good, the Land treats you the same. The Land's gotta have people to talk on its behalf ... it's just like a living thing when we talk for it. There's nowhere that's godforsaken or where God cannot be.

M K Turner, Arrernte woman.

Take some time to reconnect with the land where you are. Gather up some soil in your hands. Spend some time pondering this presence with you. Where did it come from? How old is it? What might have lived in it...or does live in it now? What does soil like this produce for your benefit? How is God at work in this handful of soil?

Sunday, 15th December

"The most difficult transition to make is from an anthropocentric to a biocentric norm of progress. If there is to be any true progress, then the entire life community must progress. Any progress of the human at the expense of the larger life community must ultimately lead to a diminishment of human life itself." Thomas Berry,

We humans are straddling a precipitous moment of cosmic history. If we continue to ignore the signs of decline all around us, beginning with climate change, we will become an extinct species. We should not be surprised, as millions of species have become extinct, including our hominid forebearers. Ilia Delio.

Think about the ways we still function in a "human -only"-centred world. What might be some statements or decisions that have been made to the exclusion of 'all creation', e.g. We have to look after our planet to leave something for our grandchildren?

Monday, 16th December

"Those who are greedy for unjust gain make trouble for their households, but those who hate bribes will live. It is better to be of humble spirit among the poor than to divide the spoil with the proud. All day long the wicked crave more, but the honest give and do not hold back.

Prov 15:27;16:19; 21:26

"A greedy insistence that the whole of nature and life must present itself to our voracious demand for instantaneous intelligibility is a symptom of all world-shrinking ideology."
— John F. Haught

Our word "greed" comes from the old English word voracious: "always hungry for more." Where do you see people inordinately hungry for more? What about yourself. Are you satisfied with what you have? Generous people hold things with open hands and are quick to give. When in the last week have you held with open handsyour time,...your energy.....your money....your belongings?

Tuesday, 17th December

I pray that God, who gives peace, will make you completely holy. And may your spirit, soul, and body be kept healthy and faultless until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Thess. 5: 23

The shift from seeing ourselves as separate beings placed on earth to seeing ourselves as an expression of Earth is a major shift in our understanding of who we are. It's a shift at the deepest level.
Michael Dowd, Connie Barlow

How are you feeling now about the idea that humans are not at the pinnacle of creation, nor that the universe revolves around Earth?
Write a few lines to yourself about any changes to your understanding and how you might live into these.

Wednesday, 18th December

*Jesus then asked,
"But who do you say
I am?"*

*Peter answered, "You
are the Messiah sent
from God,"*

*God who not only
created, but is
constantly creating.*

Lk 9:20

The Christian message is that God has become flesh [sarx in Greek or "matter"]—not a part of God or one aspect of God but the whole infinite, eternal God Creator has become matter. Christianity is the most radical of all world religions because it takes matter seriously as the home of divinity. Ilija Delio

Try to come to some inner quiet, taking a few deep breaths; Ponder:
In what way does your being the 'home of divinity' resonate with you?
What did Jesus mean in asking the question: "Who do you say I am?"
What image/object expresses your response?

Thursday 19th December

*The Word became
a human being
and lived here with
us.*

Jn 1:14

Through his DNA, Jesus took on not just Mary's biological past, but the genetic inheritance of the Semitic peoples. . . . He inherited chemical bonds laid down in the cooling of supernovae, structures that developed in plants, muscle and tissue structure found in animals, and finally the embodied spirit unique to human creatures.

Neil Vaney

Create your own Christmas card on the theme of 'The Word became flesh and lived with us'.
Include a cover image and greeting;
Perhaps you may want an image inside;
Write a message for inside;
Be as creative as you like with colour, shape and content.
With whom will you share the card you have made?

Friday 20th December

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law.

Rom 13:8

Humanity may destroy the possibilities for life on earth unless the freedom and power that we have acquired are channelled in new creative directions by a spiritual awareness and moral commitment that transcend nationalism, racism, sexism, religious sectarianism, anthropocentrism, and the dualism between human culture and nature. This is the great issue for the twenty-first century. Steven Clark Rockefeller

For your eyes only:
Draw up a list of:
Those to whom you owe a debt of love;
Those for whom you need to undo the bonds you have placed on them;
Those whose company you find difficult;
Those whom you know personally who are on the margins;
Those who have unbound you;
Finish by writing your own "Psalm of Reconciliation".

Saturday, 21st December

Our view of our common home and our relationship to God are closely linked. How many Christmas trees have you seen recently? We decorate trees for festive occasions; we shelter under them in the heat; we admire their beauty. We also tear them down to make way for cultivation and turn them into wood chip and paper..... deep bonding with Earth and cosmos is at the heart of the ecological conversion.....

Mary Tinney RSM

O Christmas Tree, O Christmas tree, How lovely are your branches!

Not only green in summer's heat, But also winter's snow and sleet.

O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree, How lovely are your branches!

O Christmas Tree, O Christmas tree, We learn from all your beauty;

Your bright green leaves with festive cheer, Give hope and strength throughout the year

O Christmas Tree, O Christmas tree, We learn from all your beauty.

Follow these links to see Judi Dench talk about her passion for trees.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=48tHOY-TvLE>

AND/OR

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YCQ62deoq_8

Sunday 22nd December

"Love is the most universal, the most tremendous and the most mysterious of the cosmic forces... the physical structure of the universe is love."

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

With Mary and all women who have experienced birth-giving, "may we too labour with creation to give birth to a new heaven and a new earth." May we "find the Holy Child with Mary his Mother, and with his mother Earth."

Terry Moran

Take your place among
The Midwives of the Future:
What might be some of the processes necessary to deliver the future?
What relaxation and coping techniques might be needed?
From where will you find confidence to face the unknowns?
What is your level of trust in birthing the future?
What pain management may be required?
How will the newborn future be nourished?
Share the experience of being Midwife of the Future with an other.

Monday 23rd December

We are losing our attitude of wonder, of contemplation, of listening to creation and thus we no longer manage to interpret in it what Benedict XVI calls "the rhythm of the love-story between God and man".

Cultivating and caring for creation do not only entail the relationship between us and the environment, between man and creation. They also concern human relations....a human ecology. We are living in a time of crisis; we see it in the environment, but above all we see it in men and women.

Pope Francis

Before Christmas I simply ask my family if there was anything that needed to be wrapped, and the answer was almost always yes. When I wrap gifts, I'm able to feel a sense of peace and quiet, a sense of bringing people close beside me in love during the activity.....it also lets me do something creative for people who are special either to my family members, or to me. The wrapping gives me the opportunity to say something that's hard to put into words. Anon

What has happened to cause us to lose our sense of 'wonder, contemplation, and listening to creation'?....to think and live horizontally, and no longer reading signs of God?

While at Christmas we speak of Love, Joy, and Peace, we know full well that for many it is a time of tears, violence, and tragedy.

How will you be compassion and kindness to the sadness-filled near you in the coming days?

What practical steps could you take?

Tuesday, 24th December

*God said "I love you,"
and said it so
profoundly
that the word
became matter."*

Anon

Christmas Eve 1968—as The Apollo 8 crew approached their tenth and last orbit of the Moon, the crew made a final TV broadcast back to Earth. At the end of the transmission, each of the crew signed off in turn by reading the first verses of the book of Genesis: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth..." Commander Frank Borman was the last to read: "And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called the Seas: and God saw that it was good. And from the crew of Apollo 8, we close with good night, good luck, a Merry Christmas, and God bless all of you - **all of you on the good Earth.**"

On this Christmas eve,
find a few minutes to
sit quietly,
to reflect on the
journey that has
brought you to this
day,
and listen to your
favourite Christmas
Carols.