

Ecumenical Advocacy Days 2009 – “Enough for All Creation”

Sunday, March 15, 2009

Interdenominational Worship: Washed in Living Water, Called to Transform the Earth

Call to Worship:

Leader gestures for all to stand.

Leader: Creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God ...

All: And not only creation, but we ourselves, groan inwardly while we await the redemption of our bodies. (based on Romans 8:19,23)

Opening Song

Opening Prayer:

(prayer provided by Ms. Tevyn East)

Leader: This world is not the accomplishment of a moment of your time,
O God, that we can see clearly.

Those rugged cliffs, thrust from the depths of the sea,
filled with the evidence of the past
were not created in the blinking of an eye.

The diamond's hardness
did not come suddenly.

This is the work of an infinite patience
the creation of something
of which its creator could be pleased.

And now God, this infinite patience,
this creative love is directed towards us
formed as we are from the very elements
of the world in which we live.

Your creative Spirit still at work
tireless, ceaseless
endlessly creating in our hearts the
image of your likeness.

The only difference being

the diamond had no choice
in whether it would be transformed
into such beauty.

You have given us an even greater gift – to choose to be patient, attentive, and caring like you to creation. As we enter into this final day of preparation for advocacy, help us to draw strength from the gifts of the four directions from which we have come, and prepare us to return there renewed in your work.

Let us pray silently for this intention.

(Pause for 15 second count)

Leader: Let us pray together:

**All: O God, Creator of the universe and of all that lives and breathes,
from your dwelling place you refresh the mountains and forests.
The earth is filled with the fruits of your work.
You make grass grow for the herds,
plants and fruit trees for people to farm,
drawing their bread from the earth.**

**You entrusted your Creation to us.
We beseech you: save us from the temptation of power and domination.
May your Spirit of Wisdom teach us
how best to care for and safeguard what you entrust to us.
May your Spirit of life, O God, blow on your people, as it hovers over all
creation.
Amen.**

Leader sits and (if necessary) gestures for all to sit. Readers go to their places.

Reflective Reading: On the Eighth Day

(adapted from John L. Bell, *He Was in the World: Meditations for Public Worship* (Iona Community: GIA Publications, Inc., 1995))

Reader 1: After the making of heaven and earth,
and after the time of resting;
and after the Word had returned,
and after the Spirit's sending,
God gazed, in love, over creation.
And, behold,
the world had lost its intended form
and thick darkness brooded everywhere.

Reader 2: On the eighth day,
God looked on humanity;
and humanity was a mess.
Emaciated by hunger,
bloated by excess,
maimed by war,
blinded by bigotry,
the people of earth lurched towards the abyss.
Women, demeaned and exploited,
Men, turned brute by their basest desires,
covered over their Creator's image.
And God said,

Reader 3: Do they not remember
how I lifted them like children to my cheek?
Have they now forgotten
that I have written their name on my hands?
This is not good.
I call on the evening and I call on the morning
to witness my displeasure.
And I long for a different day.

Silent reflection (15 sec count)

Reader 3: On the ninth day,
God looked at the creatures of earth;
and the creatures of earth were a mess.
The fish of the sea were bloated with cancers,
the birds of the air were swaddled in oil,
the beasts of the wild were hunted as trophies,
the beasts of the field were imprisoned in factories;
animals everywhere fell prey to experiment,
tortured and tested behind the smokescreen of science.
And God said,

Reader 2: What shall become of the humble donkey,
the gentle beast which carried my son?
What shall become of the graceful swallow
which built its nest in the eaves of my house?
This is not good.
I call on the evening and I call on the morning
to witness my displeasure.

And I long for a different day.

(Pause a beat)

Reader 1: On the tenth day,
God looked at the sky.
and the sky was a mess.
The sun, once earth's friend,
had become a great danger,
threatening the world
through a peppered ozone layer;
the stars which once spoke
of the harmony of heaven,
now witnessed with horror
the militarization of space.
And God said,

Reader 2: Does humankind no longer
lift up its eyes and wonder'?
Must earth destroy the tapestry
my hands are still embroidering?
This is not good.
I call on the evening and I call on the morning
to witness my displeasure.
And I long for a different day.

Silent reflection (15 sec count)

Reader 3: On the eleventh day,
God looked at the fertile earth,
and the fertile earth was a mess.
Fields which should have fed the hungry
grew cash crops for 'civilized' cravings;
pastures had become barren
through constant overgrazing;
rainforests had vanished
to pay off debt and interest;
fruit and grain were suspect
where prone to overspraying;
trees were scabbed and wilted
through lack of healthy air.
And God said,

Reader 1: Where are the lilies of the field,

arrayed in majestic splendor?
How safe are the ears of corn
my Son once picked on a Sabbath?
This is not good.
I call on the evening and I call on the morning
to witness my displeasure.
And I long for a different day.

(Pause a beat)

Reader 2: On the twelfth day,
God looked at the land and sea,
and the land and sea were a mess.
Contaminated by waste, debilitated by detergents,
the gentle waves heaved with hideous terror;
the ground, fouled with fertilizer,
had lost its inherent goodness;
and, tainted by nuclear fall-out,
deserts glistened with living death.
And God said,

Reader 3: How can the valleys sing with joy?
How can the seas roar in triumph?
How can the mountains clap their hands
if nature is bereaved?
This is not good.
I call on the evening and I call on the morning
to witness my displeasure.
And I long for a different day.

Silent reflection (15 sec count)

Reader 2: On the thirteenth day,
God looked at light and darkness,
and light and darkness were a mess.
Truth was in exile,
displaced by lies and rumor.
Imperialism masqueraded as justice;
intervention wore the cloak of welfare;
cheap pleasure stole the mantle of love,
and the religion of the privileged
was proclaimed heir to the throne
of the Savior of the poor.
And God said,

Reader 1: Who can believe what I have seen?
To whom did I think
I had revealed my power?
This is not good.
I call on the evening and I call on the morning
to witness my displeasure.
And I long for a different day.

(Pause a beat)

Reader 2: On the fourteenth day,
God looked at the world
which was born out of love,
crafted with beauty
now disfigured by chaos.

And God ... wept.

Silent reflection (15 sec count)

Reader 3: When the time of the weeping was done,
God said,
I have kept faith with my children on earth.
I have trusted them
to be stewards of the land
and guardians of its creatures.

Reader 2: I promised them nature's kindly gifts
as long as they lived with justice.
I promised them every spiritual gift
as long as they cared for creation.
And then,
then when I saw they had lost their way
and lived and languished far from me,
I sent my Son to save the world
and bring my people home.

Reader 1: Oh, children of earth,
in silence now I wait.
I watch and I wait.
Choose now, my sons and daughters,
what shall brood over you -
thick darkness

or the Holy Spirit?

Silent reflection (15 sec count) as readers exit from stage.

Homilist goes to podium to proclaim the Scripture reading without any acclamation or procession. The leader stands and gestures for all to stand before the reading.

Scripture: John 4:5-42 (excerpted)

Reader: A reading from the Gospel According to John

Jesus came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.)

Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." The woman said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his family and his flocks drank from it?"

Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life."

The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water." Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back." The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!"

The woman said to him, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship God must worship in spirit and truth."

The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming." "When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us." Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one who is speaking to you."

Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?" They left the city and were on their way to him.

Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I have ever done." So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word.

The gospel of salvation!

All: Praise to you, Jesus Christ.

Intercessions

Leader gestures for all to stand.

During the intercessions, the book of intentions from the chapel is processed down the center aisle SLOWLY. It is then brought up to the stage and held before the people until the end of the intercessions, where it is opened and left on the altar.

Water and Commitment Rite:

Leader comes down to the level of the water bowl.

Leader: My brothers and sisters in Christ,
we do well as we prepare for our work of advocacy to give thanks to God through
Jesus Christ our Savior.
When he asked the woman of Samaria for water to drink,
Christ was preparing her to receive the gift of faith.
In his thirst to receive her in faith,
he awakened in her heart the fire of God's love.

We turn now to ask God to bless this water as sign of our common baptism into
Christ. May it become for us a sign of the living water within us which gushes up
to eternal life and a reminder of our commitment to the Gospel of Christ and its
implications in our personal, social, ecclesial, and political lives.

Let us pray: (*slight pause*)

(Leader places a hand in the water)

Let this water be for us a sign of our commitment to our baptismal call to be attentive caretakers of your creation, and people who respond passionately to the call of justice.

We ask this in the name of Jesus, your Son.

**All: Amen.
Springs of water, bless God,
Give glory and praise forever!**

Leader: We invite you now to come forward to let the living water of Christ flow over you.

Come forward as individuals or as groups and take the time to bless yourselves and others with this blessed water.

As you return to your seats, you will be presented with a baskets containing a variety of seeds. Please take ONE seed home with you and plant it. As it grows it will reveal itself to you. As you nurture it and determine how best to care for it, you will enter a bit more fully into the mystery of creation. Let it be a symbol of your commitment to the work of caring for creation, repairing the world, and building a global community of love and justice.

Leader encourages those in the front rows nearest the water to begin to come forward. During this time, leader also takes part in the ritual and, if needed, assists others in handing out seeds or ensuring the water bowl is stable. Seeds are presented to each person.

During the rite, people join in singing the songs prepared.

During the ritual, the leader and group representatives return to the stage and after all have come forward, the leader invites all to STAND and leads people immediately in the New Genesis reading. Group representatives are responsible for leading the parts listed.

Reading of Commitment: New Creation

(significant adaptation of "New Genesis" by Robert Muller – original can be found at <http://www.robertmuller.org>)

Leader: In a new beginning, that is, today, the Spirit of God again moved over the earth.

- Women: And God saw that all nations of the earth, black and white, poor and rich, from North and South, from East and West, and of all creeds were sending their emissaries to a tall glass house of United Nations, to study together, to think together and to care together for the world and all its people.
And God said: *That is good.*
And it was the first day of the New Age of the Earth.
- Men: And God saw that keepers of peace were separating the combatants of quarreling nations, that differences were being resolved by negotiation and reason instead of arms, and that the leaders of nations were seeing each other, talking to each other and joining their hearts, minds, souls and strength for the benefit of all humanity.
And God said: *That is good.*
And it was the second day of the Earth at Peace.
- Young Adults (18-40): And God saw that humans were loving the entire creation, the stars and the sun, the day and the night, the air and the oceans, the earth and the waters, the fish and the birds, the flowers and the herbs, and all their human brothers and sisters.
And God said: *That is good.*
And it was the third day of the Earth of Joy.
- Wisdom Adults (Over 40): And God saw that humans were suppressing hunger, disease, ignorance and suffering all over the globe, providing each human person with a decent, conscious and happy life, and reducing the greed and undue influence of those with exorbitant wealth.
And God said: *That is good.*
And it was the fourth day of the Earth of Justice.
- Parents (& Children): And God saw that humans were living in harmony with their planet and in peace with one another, wisely managing their resources, avoiding waste, curbing excesses, replacing hatred with love, greed with contentment, arrogance with humility, division with cooperation, and mistrust with understanding.
And God said: *That is good.*
And it was the fifth day of the new Ecosystems of the Earth.
- Single Persons: And God saw that the people's efforts at diplomacy, justice, and care for creation turned the hearts of vengeful people from hate, to understanding, and, finally, after much work, to love. Faith, hope and love replaced mistrust, fear and hurt.
And God said: *That is good.*
And it was the sixth day of the Earth of Cooperation and Reason.

All Ministers: And God saw humans restore God and the dignity of the human person and creation as the Alpha and Omega, placing institutions, beliefs, politics, governments, and all human entities in the service of God, the people, and the planet.

And God saw them adopt as their supreme law: “You shall love God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no greater commandment than these.”

And God said: *That is very good.*

And it was the seventh day of the Earth of God.

Closing Blessing

Leader: The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!”

ALL: And let everyone who hears say, “Come.”

Leader: The one who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.”

ALL: Amen. Come Lord Jesus!

Leader: The grace of Jesus Christ be with us all!

ALL: Amen.

Closing Song

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