

Our Blessed Earth: We Are One

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INTRODUCTION

Pope Francis uses the term “integral ecology” to refer to the way that, because we are interconnected — with each other, with all other creatures, and with the rest of creation itself — we are tasked with helping to develop a harmonious whole.

We know the waters feed the trees, which clean the air, which fills our lungs. Clean water, land and trees are all essential parts of a healthy earth and healthy people. Just as our ecosystem functions or fails as one, so too we thrive or wither as one. Integral ecology is best understood as an invitation: we are each invited to use our gifts and our talents to build up a living ecosystem wherein nothing falls through the cracks, and each part is integrated to the good of the whole.

Francis’ description of integral ecology is deeply connected to the common good, which refers to all those social conditions necessary to realize fulfillment and human thriving. Consider how each one of us might work for the benefit of the other, in a world we share together. How might we better ensure the interconnected flourishing of all God’s blessed creation?

READING (Psalm 104: 1; 19-20; 24-25)

Bless the Lord, my soul!
Lord, my God, you are great indeed!

You made the moon to mark the seasons,
the sun that knows the hour of its setting.
You bring darkness and night falls,
then all the animals of the forest wander about.

How varied are your works, Lord!
In wisdom you have made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.

There is the sea, great and wide!
It teems with countless beings,
living things both large and small.

Bless the Lord, my soul!
Lord, my God, you are great indeed!

INTERCESSIONS

As we pray together, the response is, “Bless the Lord, my soul.”

We pray for awareness, of ourselves and of the world around us, that we might consciously make space in our hurried lives to notice the dignity of the created world. We pray to the Lord:

Response: *Bless the Lord, my soul.*

We pray for courage, that we might become a sincere and ready instrument for peace, beauty and fullness to all people and spaces in need. We pray to the Lord:

Response: *Bless the Lord, my soul.*

We pray for the strength to act, that we might be willing to strike out on new paths together to meet the needs of the present. We pray to the Lord:

Response: *Bless the Lord, my soul.*

CLOSING PRAYER

Creator, you give us life.
Help us to honor you
as we care for your precious creation.

Redeemer, you give us hope.
Help us to see new ways of living
as we turn from the path of destruction.

Holy Spirit, you give us unity.
Help us to find strength in the love between us
as we seek healing for the Earth.

Through Christ, our Lord, we pray: Amen.