Season of Creation

To hope and act with Creation

Week 2: September 8



Theme; WATER

Leader: God, come to our assistance

All: O Lord, make haste to help us.

Introduction

Season of Creation is a time when we reflect on the importance of creation and the creator. Every creation has a meaning and function that teaches us the importance of gratitude, nurturing and protecting creation. In the first week of Season of Creation, we have been made to realize how creation plays an important role in our lives. The concept of first fruits derives from God's creation work. Because God created everything that exists, all of creation belongs to him (Psalm 24:1). Consequently, that which is first and best belongs to him and is to be given to him.

God's creative power and ownership of all, the Bible instructs believers to give God the best of the animal sacrifices (see Lev. 1-5). The land is also viewed as a gift from God and the best of it, its "first fruits, " is to be given to him — crops (Exodus 23:16 Exodus 23:19), the wheat harvest (Exod 34:22 ; Lev 2:14 ; 23:20), olive oil (Num 18:12 ; Deut 18:4), the finest new wine (Num 18:12 ; Deut 18:4), honey (2 Chron 31:5), sheep wool (Deut 18:4), and fruit (Neh 10:35). The Old Testament makes it clear that everything that God's people have is to be viewed as from God and gained through his providence (Psalm 50:10). In this season of Creation, we want to reflect on all the element of the “firstfruits.” For the first week we reflected on the element of light.

For this second week we want to reflect on water. Water is often seen as a powerful symbol of cleansing and purification in biblical teachings. Its symbolic significance lies in its ability to purify and wash away impurities, both physical and spiritual. In ancient times, water was used in various ritual practices to signify the cleansing of sins and the renewal of one's spiritual state.

The act of baptism, for instance, involves immersing oneself in water as a symbolic representation of being cleansed of one's sins and starting afresh. The act of being submerged in water and then rising up out of it signifies a transformation from the old self to a new self, purified and forgiven. It is a public declaration of faith and a commitment to follow Jesus. This symbolism is deeply rooted in biblical teachings and can be seen in various passages.

Opening Prayer

Creator, we turn our attention to acknowledge and give thanks for Your gift of water. The mighty seas, the calm lakes, the rivers, the streams, and the rain that falls to refresh our sister mother earth. At the beginning of creation, You sanctified the waters. Your gift is indispensable to all life on earth. It grows our food; it sustains all living things physically. When we are in need of spiritual strength, You instructed us to go down to the water and wash our spirits clean. Awaken the heart of those who exploit Your gift for profit. And forgive those of us who take Your gift for granted. Help us to remember the preciousness of Your gift and give us the wisdom to use Your gift wisely and to share it equitably. *Amin*

Psalm

Antiphon: My soul thirsts for God, the living God.

Psalm 42

As the deer longs for streams of ***water,***
so my soul longs for You, O God.
My soul thirsts for God, the living God.
When can I enter and see the face of God?
My tears have been my bread day and night,
as they ask me every day, "Where is Your God?"
Those times I recall as I pour out my soul,
when I would cross over to the shrine of the Mighty One,
to the house of God, amid loud cries of thanksgiving,
with the multitude keeping festival.
Why are You downcast, my soul; why do You groan within me?
Wait for God, for I shall again praise him, my savior and my God.
My soul is downcast within me;
therefore, I remember You from the land of the Jordan and Hermon,
from Mount Mizar,
Deep calls to deep in the roar of Your torrents,
and all Your waves and
breakers sweep over me.
By day may the LORD send his mercy,
and by night may his righteousness be with me!
I will pray to the God of my life,
I will say to God, my rock: "Why do You forget me?
Why must I go about mourning with the enemy oppressing me?"
It shatters my bones, when my adversaries reproach me,
when they say to me every day: "Where is Your God?"
Why are You downcast, my soul, why do You groan within me?

Wait for God, for I shall again praise him,
my savior and my God.
Glory be to God our Creator, to Jesus our savior, and to the life-giving Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be forever. Amen

Reading: 1 Peter 3:18-22

For Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the sake of the unrighteous, that he might lead You to God. Put to death in the flesh, he was brought to life in the spirit. After being made alive, he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirit to those who were disobedient long ego waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him.

Reflection:

Water reveals our sense of identity (the who), our sense of place (the where), and our meaning and purpose in the world (the why). And underlying all of these deeply human questions lies a central question of ethics—what does it mean to flourish in the world as a human being? The quality of the water we encounter in our daily lives is one way to think about human flourishing and what it means to thrive in a particular place. "Water quality has a striking effect on all aspects of life," explains Shockley. One of his research interests involves water quality, specifically the process of groundwater remediation. One feature of this process involves "an examination of different conceptions of what 'success' in water remediation looks like for different groups of people." The varying ideas regarding success tell us much about identity, about who we are and how we understand our relationship to the world around us, and how different groups view themselves and their role in the world. He has been struck by the different ways water is viewed regionally in the US: "When New Yorkers hear that I work on water issues, they instantly think about pollution; by contrast, Coloradans think of water rights." Both intuitions point to notions of flourishing and the significance of water in localized environments. Water symbolizes cleansing and purification in biblical teachings. In the biblical context water represents life and rebirth. In some cultures and religions, water is associated with spiritual cleaning. As a Christian in our Baptism, water is symbolizing new life and rebirth.

Just as water is the source of life, God has willed that this same water be the source of the baptismal renewal of all humanity in Christ. Water, together with other natural elements such as wheat, grapes and olive oil, form the basis of the sacraments and, therefore, of the economy of salvation. If they were to be lacking, we would also lack the means by which God offers and gives us His salvation. Saving the destruction of nature, in addition to helping life on the planet, prevents the sacramental doors to salvation from being closed.

Reflection; ***What are ways that the symbol of water has touched your life?***

Chantical of Creation

Ant; Praised the Lord for all Creation

O Most High, all-powerful, good Lord God,
to you belong praise, glory, honor and all blessing.
Be praised, my Lord, for all your creation
and especially for our Brother Sun,
who brings us the day and the light;
he is strong and shines magnificently.
O Lord, we think of you when we look at him.
Be praised, my Lord, for Sister Moon, and for the stars
which you have set shining and lovely in the heavens.
Be praised, my Lord, for our Brothers Wind and Air and every kind of weather
by which you, Lord, uphold life in all your creatures.
Be praised, my Lord, for Sister Water,
who is very useful to us, and humble and precious and pure.
Be praised, my Lord, for Brother Fire, through whom you give us light in the darkness:
he is bright and lively and strong.
Be praised, my Lord, for Sister Earth, our Mother,
who nourishes us and sustains us,
bringing forth fruits and vegetables of many kinds
and flowers of many colors.
Be praised, my Lord,
for those who forgive for love of you;
and for those
who bear sickness and weakness
in peace and patience
- you will grant them a crown.
Be praised, my Lord, for our Sister Death, whom we must all face.
I praise and bless you, Lord, and I give thanks to you,
and I will serve you in all humility.

Glory be to God our Creator, to Jesus our savior, and to the life-giving Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be forever. Amen

Intercession

God of goodness, who through the water of baptism incorporates us into the bosom of Your Trinitarian mystery, never let us lack the water of life and of Your salvation.

We pray for your creation, the whole cosmos including our common home, and the intricate balance in every part of the ecosystems that sustains life on Earth. *Creator God…*

May we hope and act with Creation.

We pray that we all might be open to listen to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the Poor, especially those people of the South who are facing the harsh reality of climate change. *Creator God…*

May we hope and act with creation.

God of the land, the sea, the sky: Creator of all that is seen and unseen. Open our hearts to the rhythm of Creation in the swells of the ocean, the movements of air and wind, the breath of all living things. Open our eyes to the fragile beauty of the biodiversity of which we are a part. Open our ears to the sounds of life around us. Open our minds to the awareness of our deep relationship with all your Creation. *Creator God…*

May we hope and act with Creation.

God of Light, Life and Love: Help us to seek and find your presence in all Creation. Help us to understand the roots of the ecological crisis and give us the wisdom to live resiliently in harmony with your Creation. Keep us firm in the faith that the gift of life in all its fullness is for all Creation. Help us to maintain hope that your reign of love is manifested in our common love for you, for ourselves, and for our neighbor - both human and non-human. *Creator God…*

May we hope and act with Creation.

God of truth and justice: Fill us with your spirit of compassion so we may live and act with and in solidarity with Creation. Guide us in paths of righteousness that help us to tread softly on the land and sail gently on the sea. Give us wisdom and courage to recognize our role in the evil of systemic exploitation and extraction and to speak truth to power. Give us strength of heart and hands to be agents of the ecological conversion the world so desperately needs. *Creator God…*

May we hope and act with Creation.

Our Father:

Closing Prayer:

Triune God, Creator of all, we praise you for your goodness, visible in all the diversity that you have created, making us a cosmic family living in a common home. Through the Earth you created, we experience love and nourishment, home and protection.

We confess that we do not relate to the Earth as a Mothering gift from you, our Creator. Our selfishness, greed, neglect, and abuse have caused the climate crisis, loss of biodiversity, human suffering as well as the suffering of all our fellow creatures. We confess that we have failed to listen to the groans of the Earth, the groans of all creatures, and the groans of the Spirit of hope and justice that lives within us.

May your Creator Spirit help us in our weakness, so that we may know the redeeming power of Christ and the hope found in him. May the groans of the Spirit birth in us a willingness to serve you faithfully, so that we may hear and heal Creation, to hope and act together with her, so that the firstfruits of hope may blossom. Loving and Creator God, we pray that you will make us sensitive to these groans and enable us to have the same compassion as that of Jesus, the redeeming Lord. Grant us a fresh vision of our relationship with Earth, and with one another, as creatures that are made in your image. In the name of the one who came to proclaim the good news to all Creation, Jesus Christ. Amen. *(Season of Creation 2024 Prayer)*