

REVERENCE



COMPASSION



FORGIVENESS



RECONCILIATION



REVERENCE

THE
Episcopal
CHURCH



How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven.

– GENESIS 28:17

MEDITATION

The quality of reverence derives from either an experience of wonder or is cultivated within religious communities as a spiritual virtue. Once reverence is a settled attitude, a stance towards the world, we treat all that we encounter with respect and accord each being dignity. Sustainability goals are built on a posture of reverence towards the Earth and all its creatures.

PRAYER

God of all times and places, your presence pervades the universe, and is present to each great and small being. The creation bears the stamp of love, the mark of our origin in your divine being. Prompt us with your Holy Spirit to be ever mindful of the dignity of all creation and to show reverence towards all. Amen.

*Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;
let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
let the field exult, and everything in it.
Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy.*

—PSALM 96:11-12

MEDITATION

Nothing in creation lacks the capacity for joy and exultation; indeed it is what we were created for. We all recognize these feelings momentarily, particularly in the presence of roaring seas and exultant fields and singing trees. But joy and exultation are also habits nurtured in community: we remind each other to see the beautiful, we practice attentiveness to blessing together, we revere and restore the good earth so that so that our common song of joy continue to be sung throughout the nations and the generations.

PRAYER

God who created the world in joy, establish and strengthen in us the habits of rejoicing, together with all created beings. May all that we do—our work and our resting, our movement and stillness, our words and our silence—increase in us a reverence for your creation and a shared vocation of exultation. Amen.

Seek the One that made the Pleiades and Orion, that turns deep darkness into morning, and darkens the day into night; that calls for the waters of the sea, and pours them out upon the face of the earth.

—AMOS 5:8

MEDITATION

Perhaps reverence is more than a state of mind or being, perhaps it is a cultivated art. We can be called into an initial kind of reverence by the night sky, by a deep forest, by the multitude of created beings moving in swarms, schools, and flocks across the earth; but true reverence calls for us to enter relationship with these phenomena. As the creature that mediates between soul and body humans are called to deep awareness. Our curiosity sends us deep into the earth and beyond the bounds of terrestrial orbit but it also makes us callous and careless. The lifelong performance art we call reverence demands that our curiosity go deep into relationship with the mystery things and the source that animates all life.

PRAYER

God of the deep, God beyond light and dark, God the source of Love—stir our soul into the longing for you, open our eyes to vision of you, awaken us with your presence. Help us not take for granted the universe of which we are a part. Call our intellects to higher goals than consumption. Inspire in us the gift of reverence that we might walk in life and breathe eternity. Amen.

COMPASSION

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But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

—JAMES 3:17

MEDITATION

True wisdom does not come from the news article or the book we read. It comes from inward meditation and from the ‘pure’ divinity above. When we walk with peace in our hearts and kindness in our eyes, compassion is simply an extension of the love from Creator. Love and compassion are abundant ‘good fruits’ and we may draw on them at any time in order to address the problems before us.

PRAYER

Dear Lord above, we humbly ask that you allow us to view the events unfolding around us through the lens of compassion. Let us be gentle in our relationships with one another and with the land, water, plants and animals for which we depend.

When Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his followers, ‘the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into the harvest field.’

–MATTHEW 9:36-38

MEDITATION

Do we not feel at this moment the tinge of helplessness? Recent events, the fate of the planet that has brought us together, the crush of data and information that harasses us daily, these all contribute to a sense of isolation. ‘He had compassion on them.’ Compassion means ceasing to be ‘an other.’ Compassion is allowing our sense of self to draw back to make room for another to enter. The mystics say God created the universe in just that way, by drawing back part of God’s self. What might happen if we allow our fear to draw back, to lessen our worry for self and make room for compassion? Life might be born. We are the harvesters in the field, let us bring forth both flowers of hope and fruits of love.

PRAYER

God, the Author of Love and Source of Compassion, move across the stormy waters of our inner chaos and brood within us as a dove sitting on her nest. Calm us and help us make room within our life. Let compassion be born in us.

Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.

—MATTHEW 25:34-36

MEDITATION

The United Nations Refugee Agency predicts that climate change will lead to tens of millions of refugees by 2050. The migration of desperately poor people presents a challenge that few countries have met with compassion. Yet in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus tells all the gathered nations, "I was hungry, thirsty, a stranger, and sick." The truth is that climate change affects every single one of those issues. As we seek to love and serve God in all persons, may we also come to know God in the vital links between climate change and hunger, thirst, refugees, sickness, and "the least of these," who are all members of God's family.

PRAYER

God of all times and places, you are present to us in all things. In our joy, you walk with us. In our pain, you walk with us. In our deep grief, you walk with us. By the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, lead us now into deep compassion, especially to those who are becoming refugees. May we love them like family and remember that we, too, were once strangers in a foreign land.

RECONCILIATION

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Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

– COLOSSIANS 3: 12-15

MEDITATION

Mitakuye Oyasin - A word of the Dakota/Lakota (Sioux) people often say at the conclusion of prayer. The word means, "All are related." Each and every one of us human beings, the animals of the earth, and the earth herself. All of creation. We depend on one another to live, therefore we must take care of one another. Where we are in error, may the great creator correct; reconciling us to all of creation. When we are finished praying – Mitakuye Oyasin reminds the Dakota/Lakota that our prayer was to the creator, and may we never forget our relations.

PRAYER

Great Creator of all – You have formed the mountains, Great Plains, waters, sky, and stars. In one breath you have breathed life into all of your creation. You, who have created us to be humble, caring, and ever-mindful that we are here for only a short time, and that future generations will take our places. We ask that you protect your creation – always invoking stewardship and servanthood into our hearts, with the will to maintain your gifts to us. We pray this always in your name.
Mitakuye Oyasin.

“For there is no distinction, since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

– ROMANS 3:22b-23

MEDITATION

I, a poor and empty-handed woman, face the wealthy woman. She has plundered my home, the fruits of my land, greedily taking its resources for herself. I ask Jesus, “Why?”

I, a wealthy woman, face the poor and empty-handed woman. She stands between me and the object of my desire, hatred in her dull eyes. I ask Jesus, “Why?”

We look past each other. We see Creation crying out: disappearing earth, unstable weather, barren land, starving people, ice melting away into the sea. We ask Jesus, “Why?”

Animosity. Division. Brokenness. Destruction.

PRAYER

Jesus, I come to you with my brokenness, and the brokenness of my neighbor. Together, we come to you with the brokenness of our Earth. Help us to stretch out our hands long and our arms wide. To reach past the animosity, past the division. To step out into the void of fear. To extend our embrace in faith of reaching the other side, of reaching each other. Help our humble prayers and repentance become a solid bridge to passage, encounter, relationship, communion. Together, help us to sacrifice for each other, and for our Creation, as you sacrificed yourself to redeem our brokenness. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

*In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself...
and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.
So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is
making his appeal through us.*

– 2 CORINTHIANS 5:19-20

MEDITATION

God's most urgent desire for the human race is that all people be restored to unity with him, with their fellow human beings, and with all creation around them. A world of unity, integrity, and wholeness is one in which none go hungry, none are at war, and all respect the health, dignity, and balance of the wider world and the cosmos. The sustainability goals are ultimately about a world reconciled and restored to wholeness. We are the hands of God in the world.

PRAYER

God of unbounded grace, you declare the power of your reconciling love in the death and resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ. Teach us, who live only in your forgiveness, to forgive one another. Heal our divisions and cast out our fears; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

FORGIVENESS

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“And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”

– MATTHEW 11:25

MEDITATION

When we ask God for forgiveness, we often bow our heads and turn inward for reflection, solace, and healing. Yet the abundant forgiveness that we find in the Risen Christ also calls us to open our eyes and actively restore our relationships with our neighbors, and with all creation. Let's look up from our inner dialogues, our stresses, and our screens today to see what God is doing in the world, to heal what is broken, and to bring wholeness to the Body of Christ.

PRAYER

Compassionate Creator, who calls us into right relationship with you, with our neighbors, and with the beautiful earth that you have made, empower us this day to transcend our self-focused ways and actively serve as your light in the world. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

—1 CORINTHIANS 5:17

MEDITATION

Shame, doubt and and fear stand in the way of our ability to embrace new behaviors and possibilities. Within a community of forgiveness, however, all manner of transformation is possible, and engaging in sustainable change can become common and creative practice. It is in the context of offering forgiveness to, and receiving forgiveness from, each other that the new creation in Christ is birthed.

PRAYER

Birthing God, whose Holy Spirit blesses us with the capacity to forgive and be forgiven, help us to be honest about our need to transform behaviors that cause harm to ourselves and to your creation. Empower us to be a people who listen to, learn from, and forbear with all of creation, so that we can labor and live into the promise of all things made new. Amen.

Hear Jesus' summary of the law: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and all the prophets."

—MATTHEW 22:37-40

MEDITATION

I imagine a conversation with my grandchildren, who are not born yet. I can almost see their eyes, feel their touch as they sit in my lap, hear their question: "Why?" Why indeed. Why did it take us so long to preserve this fragile Earth, our island home. Why did we put short-term profit above long term wellbeing for so long. Why didn't we organize soon enough? Why did we let this all happen? And all I can imagine saying in response is, "We are so sorry. Will you forgive us? We know now, and we are doing everything in our power to love neighbor as self, to protect this place called Home."

PRAYER

Kyrie eleison.
Christe eleison.
Kyrie Eleison.

Lord have mercy.
Christ have mercy.
Lord have mercy.

Amen.

COURAGE

Diocese of California



INTERBEING

Diocese of California



SORROW

Diocese of California



HONESTY

Diocese of California



COURAGE

Diocese of California



I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous.

—Matthew 5:44-45

MEDITATION

From where will our courage come, and what will sustain it? Will it come from our rage against injustice? Can it prevail by our attunement to darkness? While these may move us into courageous action, they cannot keep us there. Only love will keep us strong. Love for all kindred and those we call our enemies. Crosses are carried by love.

PRAYER

God of all creation, you are lover and sustainer of all you have made: predator and prey, parasite and host, the kind and the cruel; help us to love all our kindred as ourselves, and walk in love as Christ has taught us, that we too might find the courage to love the stranger and the enemy, and sustain our hearts for the good work you have given us to do. Amen.

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me.

—John 14:1

MEDITATION

In the last hours before his death, Jesus counseled his disciples to act with courage. Inviting them to step away from their fear and doubt, Jesus reminded his friends that their belief in the Kingdom could power a movement. Christ gives us the power to boldly declare the already-present Kingdom.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, as your holy Son moved ever closer to his impending crucifixion, he reminded us of the power of faith to overcome fear. Inspire within us that same strength that we might confront our daily crosses and might aspire to the true reality of the Kingdom. In the name of the same Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, we pray. Amen.

Jesus began to weep. And they said, 'See how he loved Lazarus!'

—John 11:35

MEDITATION

Jesus shows us the courage to love so deeply that we are greatly moved by loss. We can't turn a blind eye, because we feel the loss of those we love deep down. In this passage, Jesus joins his inner circle as they grieve the loss of their friend, Lazarus. The English text reads "He was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved," but the original Greek is stronger. It might be translated, "His whole body heaved with a sense of loss. He felt it deep inside." And so Jesus wept, showing us what it means to love hard. To love is to find courage to be transformed, to grieve the loss of those we love, and to recommit ourselves to restoration. As we gather today, species are going extinct 1,000 times faster than normal, coral reefs are dying and will not return, and ancient rainforests are burning. When we go to bed tonight, the oceans will be a bit more acidic, the deserts larger, Earth a bit warmer.

PRAYER

Please God, give us courage to lament this loss, and to give our full selves toward a new future. Give us the courage to reject half truths and easy answers. Fill us with courage to speak out and stand up. Empower us to move past divisions and forge new partnerships. Give us courage to name our dependence on all of your creation. And send us forth renewed and inspired to share your love. Amen.

INTERBEING

Diocese of California



God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone.

—John 1:3-4

MEDITATION

The Eastern Church Father, Maximus the Confessor, believed that through the Word (logos) all creatures participate in God's identity. The Word gives life and meaning to everything that exists. When we turn our attention from finite, individual creatures (usually ourselves) to see the divine Word that binds all creatures together, we can, through our loving, bring ourselves and all creation into union with God.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, you are the divine Word that brings life and light, love and meaning to all creation; help us to turn away from selfish desire and anxious self-affirmation to the bountiful richness of your creation, and to recognize our oneness, through you, with everything that is; help us to act with compassion and responsibility toward all creatures so that one day the whole creation may be brought into blessed union with its creator. Amen.

That they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me."

—John 17:21

MEDITATION

At the core of the Christian faith is the knowledge that the person of God is a tripartite but singular, interconnected ultimate reality. In our creation, we are invited into that relationship. We show that relationship through our connectedness with each other and with God's creation. We connect with each other because Christ first connected with us.

PRAYER

Holy Father, in the incarnation of your Son, you showed us how to be in relationship to one another. Continually inspire in us a desire to draw ever closer to your creation that we might know the intimacy of your divine community. In the power of the Holy Spirit we pray through our Savior and model, Jesus Christ. Amen.

I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb.

—Revelation 21:22, 23

MEDITATION

The vision of the New Jerusalem closes the Book of Revelation, which closes the Christian Bible. The New Jerusalem is located within the Garden of Eden, the primal setting of the origin story in the Bible — we are presented with a unified vision of a sustainable city-in-nature. In this revelation of how human life should be lived on the Earth, the Divine Presence suffuses everything, everyone, showing that God connects us all together in an integrated, living Creation.

PRAYER

Loving God, You, and all life, which comes forth from You and which You sustain, are wondrously present within me. I open myself, with your divine aid, to all of life, to all the joys, all the suffering. Work in me and through me your healing, that all may be brought to the unity of will and love that is the dream of God. Amen.

SORROW

Diocese of California



Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.

—2 Corinthians 7:10

MEDITATION

We know about environmental sorrow. We have all heard the dire predictions and gloomy warnings. We have all lamented the loss of human and nonhuman life. But can we find and sustain Godly sorrow? Can we sit with that loss, neither denying it nor wallowing in it, but allowing it to move us to repentance and compassion? Worldly sorrow cannot save us; Godly sorrow just might.

PRAYER

God of compassion and mercy, you share our sorrow and grief just as surely as you share our joy and hope; help us to acknowledge the loss that our actions have caused, to lament that loss and repent; and give us the wisdom and grace to allow that sorrow to move us not to anger and frustration, but to discernment and faithful action. Amen.

To go in the dark with a light is to know the light/To know the dark, go dark. Go without sight/And find that the dark, too, blooms and sings/ And is traveled by dark feet and dark wings.

—Wendell Berry, “To Know the Dark”

MEDITATION

We spend much of our lives trying to escape our sorrow through distraction. Perhaps we indulge our senses with pleasure, or fill our days with so much activity that we have little time left to sit with the grief on our hearts. Yet the discomfort of sorrow, the uncertainty of darkness, brings us closer to our Creator and draws us into communion with all life. Today, how can we still our minds to meet our sadness with open hearts, courageously and faithfully venturing into the darkness before us?

PRAYER

Gracious Creator: You have given us the brilliant hope of dawn breaking, and the quiet mystery of the dark night. Today, guide us as we venture into the landscape of darkness. Help us to sit softly with our sorrow and to listen for you. In the dark, as in the light, we know that you are near. In Your Name we pray, Amen.

O that my head were a spring of water, and my eyes a fountain of tears, so that I might weep day and night for the slain of my poor people!

—Jeremiah 9:1

MEDITATION

The holiness of lament can never be overstated, especially within a dominant culture that encourages us to “get over it” and “move on.” Even as destruction was being visited upon his people, Jeremiah/God cried out in great sorrow. Liturgical lament is not just sadness, but is a reflection of worship and hope in the face of overwhelming grief. Today is a day for lament.

PRAYER

Merciful God, in whom we live and move and have our being, visit upon us a lively sense of your presence even in the midst of so much passing away; that we, following the examples of the prophets may cry aloud at the destruction we have wrought upon your creation while also sharing the hope of renewal and re-creation.

In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials.

—1 Peter 1:6

MEDITATION

This passage speaks fully to our reality that life brings sorrows, and the Christian life is no exception — and yet, we have hope. Years ago I worked with natural resource specialists in the Czech Republic on remediating soil damaged from sulfur air pollution deposition. The soil in some regions could not sustain any plant life; the land was a barren landscape. Our Czech colleagues were in despair — the electric power the country depended on produced the toxic sulfur. They were living in profound distress at the depletion of soil, a precious resource. Two decades later, these dilemmas have multiplied, and we are reminded we are not removed from sorrow. Yet we are called from sorrow to hope.

PRAYER

We pray dear God, help us to rest firmly in your love, knowing that our feelings of sorrow for our planet's woes — connected to the human family and all that lives — will be, in your time, yet a little while. We pray that we do not turn away, that we understand not only our own sorrow but that of our global neighbors, and that as fully as we sorrow we may also fully know, through your grace and mercy, hope through our redeemer the Christ. In the Spirit we pray, Amen.

HONESTY

Diocese of California



The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the foremost. But for that very reason I received mercy, so that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display the utmost patience, making me an example to those who would come to believe in him for eternal life.

—1 Timothy 1:15

MEDITATION

Let's be honest. It is not us and them. There are no "those people." We cannot heal the web of life by dividing the saints from the sinners. We cannot join in reconciling all creation by creating winners and losers. We are all in this together, and must receive mercy together. Perhaps the most challenging reconciliation we face is the one within our own divided hearts.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, you are the source of eternal life and author of salvation. Cleanse our hearts by the inspiration of your Spirit, that we might see ourselves and all others as they truly are, sinners in need of redemption and loved by you. Help us to speak truth in love, that all might obtain eternal life. Amen.

Let your word be 'Yes, Yes' or 'No, No'; anything more than this comes from the evil one.

—Matthew 5:37

MEDITATION

We spend so much of our lives couching and explaining and amending, how much transparency and honesty do we really show? Jesus suggests a better way for us to live: Don't obfuscate, say what you say and mean what you mean.

PRAYER

In a time of doubt and fear, Lord God, we give thanks for the good examples of your Son and the Prophets, who spoke your truth with all clarity. Give us, we pray, the power to speak your truth, unveiled and unmodified, that your will might be done on earth.

Thou shall not bear false witness.

—Exodus 20:16

MEDITATION

Perhaps the best test of honesty is what we say to our children. There is something about the soft, trusting eyes of a child that shakes all duplicity out of us. We might find a way to spin something out there in the hustle of life, but our kids see right through us, don't they? What truths are they asking us to tell right now? How will they view the decisions we make now when they have children of their own? As architect William McDonough writes, a sustainable world is "delightfully diverse, safe, healthy and just — with clean air, soil, water and power — economically, equitably, ecologically and elegantly enjoyed." How can our children call us to honest account as we work toward this world?

PRAYER

Loving God, help me tell the truth. Amen.



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