

Praying with Creation: the Season of Lent
Ash Wednesday through the Sunday of the Passion
Year C

by Dennis Ormseth

Ash Wednesday: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 or Isaiah 58:1-12; Psalm 51:1-17; 2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Lord, you are sovereign in our land and all the earth. Your reconciling love is steadfast and your mercy encompasses all things. We have deeply wounded your life-giving Spirit. Before we touched this land, it was a Garden of Eden; we are in danger of leaving it a desolate wilderness. Turn your righteous anger from us. Turn us toward contrition for our actions and lead us into right relationships with your whole creation.

First Sunday in Lent: Deuteronomy 26:1-11; Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16 (Ps. 91:11); Romans 10:8b-13; Luke 4:1-13

God of the seasons, as the days lengthen, we look forward in hope to the bounty your love brings forth in our land. When your Son was tempted in the wilderness, he refused the spirit of domination by which we try to gain our daily bread and even to free ourselves from earthly limitations. In this season of renewal, grant us his life-sustaining Spirit, so that we may tend the earth with joy and thanksgiving, and share its bounty with all living things.

Second Sunday in Lent: Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18; Psalm 27 (Ps. 27:5); Philippians 3:17—4:1; Luke 13:31-35

Creator of light and dark, your presence is known in the rising and setting of the sun. With the faith of Abraham we see signs of your promises in both the stars of heaven and the deep and terrifying darkness of the cleft earth. When the rulers of this world threaten to destroy the creatures of your making, the spirit of your Son gathers us as a hen gathers her brood under her wings. May the certainty of our citizenship in heaven inspire and sustain our resolve in caring for your beloved earth.

Third Sunday in Lent: Isaiah 55:1-9, Psalm 63:1-8 (Ps. 63:1), 1 Corinthians 10:1-13, Luke 13:1-9

Gracious host of all creation, you freely provide food and drink for all living creatures. You husband the fruitless tree. At our Lord's Table, you nourish us with bread that is broken, and renew our spirit with poured-out wine. Liberate us from our dependence on stores of food and energy seized and held by imperial power. Lest we all perish, move our nation's agriculture into policies and practices that respect the metabolisms of nature and resist the improvident mandates of our capital markets.

Fourth Sunday in Lent: Joshua 5:9-12, Psalm 32 (Ps. 32:11), 2 Corinthians 5:16-21, Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

Forgiving parent to all creation, your mercy is boundless. We squander the inheritance of this earth as mere commodity to be bought and sold for our comfort and entertainment. We refuse to share its bounty with our brothers and sisters in the great family of creation. Yet you welcome us home, and invite us to celebrate the feast of your new creation with all your children: those who swim beneath the waves of the sea and those who live in its soil; the children of the flowers in the meadows and the trees in the forest; all the children who roam over the land and the winged ones who fly with the winds; and yes, your human children too.

Adapted in part from Thomas Berry, *The Great Work: Our Way into the Future*.

Fifth Sunday in Lent: March 25, 2007, Isaiah 43:16-21, Psalm 126 (Ps. 126:5), Philippians 3:4b-14, John 12:1-8

Creator Spirit, wild animals honor you for your care for us, your people. Help us to honor your care for them. All relationships within your creation are graced with beauty and purpose. You have blessed all creatures with capacity for both joy and care. You bind all things together in love, and mend all brokenness. Help us to love all that you love; help us to resist all abuse, whether of persons or things.