

Season of Creation 2020 Jubilee for Earth

“

Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together ... it unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth.

”

- Pope Francis, LS 92

Week 3:

Wilderness/ Outback

Entering into the “wilderness” or “desert place” is a way of grappling with the mysteries of life. While deserts are often depicted as uninhabited or desolate regions, anyone who has spent time in such places knows that the desert supports a rich diversity of other-than-human life.

Human retreat to the wilderness can be an opportunity to encounter God in the unfamiliar and to understand oneself in relation to the other-than-human. It can reveal to us our capacities for right relationship with God, with each other, and with Earth. Right relationship resides in “power-with” rather than “power-over”.

Jesus is “filled with the Holy Spirit” and, like so many human beings before and since, is “led by the Spirit” into the wilderness to be “tested” there. - Veronica Lawson RSM (Gospel Reflection on Luke 4:1-11)”

<https://www.mercyworld.org/f/45074/x/dc00cda936/reflection-on-the-gospel-lent-1c-vl-100319.pdf>

Tuning in to each other and to wilderness

Closing your eyes, take a moment to be still and silent... Breathe deeply for a few cycles, until your breath seems of one rhythm with that of a wild place in which you have spent time alone. Take yourself there for a few moments... Allow this wild place to hold you.

Contemplation: Season of creation video: Wilderness/outback



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Reflection and Sharing:

In Israel's story, the wilderness is the place of testing for God's people: "Remember the long way that your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness...testing you to know what was in your heart" (Deuteronomy 8:2).

- What "testing of heart" might be happening for us now, as individuals and as communities?
- What does Wilderness mean for me?

A Wilderness Blessing

Leader: Blessed be wilderness.

All: Blessed be wilderness.

Leader: Blessed be the vast tropical rain forests and volcanic hills of Papua New Guinea.

All: Blessed be wilderness.

Leader: Blessed be the isolated mountains, wild rivers and clear water lakes of Aotearoa New Zealand.

All: Blessed be wilderness.

Leader: Blessed be the driest red deserts, frilled neck lizards, bilbies, dingoes and spinifex of the Australian Outback.

All: Blessed be wilderness.

Responding:

Recent research has highlighted that just 23% of the planet's land surface (excluding Antarctica) and 13% of the ocean can now be classified as wilderness, representing nearly a 10% decline over the last 20 years.

Let's set an intention to take time in a wild place alone this week. Let's pledge to learn more about the remaining wild places near us and what we can do to defend and protect them.