

Earth Day Readings, April 26, 2009

Basil of Caesarea (329-379)

Jeff Grinnell

“The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof.”
O God, enlarge within us the sense of fellowship with all living things,
Our brothers the animals to whom Thou hast given the earth as their home
In common with us. We remember with shame that in the past
we have exercised the high dominion of man
with ruthless cruelty, so that the voice of the earth,
which should have gone up to Thee in song,
has been a groan of travail. May we realize that they live, not for us alone,
but for themselves and for Thee, and that they love the sweetness of life.

Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179)

Daryce Peterson

**I am the one whose praise echoes on high.
I adorn all the earth
I am the breeze that nurtures all things green.
I encourage blossoms to flourish with ripening fruits.
I am led by the spirit to feed the purest streams.
I am the rain coming from the dew
that causes the grasses to laugh with the joy of life.
I am the yearning for good.**

St Francis (1181-1226)

Evan Hughes

Most high, almighty, good Lord! All praise, glory, honor and exaltation are yours!
To you alone do they belong, and no mere mortal dares pronounce your Name.
Praise to you, O Lord our God, for all your creatures: first, for our dear Brother Sun,
Who gives us the day and illumines us with his light;
Fair is he, in splendor radiant, bearing your very likeness, O Lord.
For our Sister Moon, and for bright, shining stars: We praise you, O Lord.
For our Brother Wind, for fair and stormy seasons and all heaven’s varied moods,
By which you nourish all that you have made: we praise you, O Lord.
For our Sister Water, so useful, lowly, precious and pure: We praise you, O Lord.
For our Brother Fire, who brightens up our darkest nights: beautiful is he and eager, invincible and keen:
We praise you, O Lord.
For our Mother Earth, who sustains and feeds us, producing fair fruits, many-colored flowers and herbs:
We praise you, O Lord...
All creatures, praise and glorify my Lord and give him thanks and serve him in great humility.
We praise you, O Lord.

Ranier Maria Rilke (1800’s)

Susan Chamberlain

All will come again into its strength:
the fields undivided, the waters undammed,
the trees towering and the walls built low.
And in the valleys, people as strong and varied as the land.

And no churches where God
is imprisoned and lamented
like a trapped and wounded animal.
The houses welcoming all who knock
and a sense of boundless offering
in all relations, and in you and me.

No yearning for an afterlife, no looking beyond,
no belittling of death,
but only longing for what belongs to us
and serving earth, lest we remain unused.

Work Song, part 2: A Vision by Frederick Buechner

Natalie Wells

Using the same old materials of earth, air, fire, and water, every twenty-four hours God creates something new out of them. If you think you're seeing the same show all over again seven times a week, you're crazy. Every morning you wake up to something that in all eternity never was before and never will be again. And the you that wakes up was never the same before and will never be the same again either. -

Wendell Berry

W. Robert Martin, III

The ecological teaching of the Bible is simply inescapable: God made the world because God wanted it made. God thinks the world is good, and God loves it. It is God's world; God has never relinquished title to it. And God has never revoked the conditions, bearing on God's gift to us of the use of it, that oblige us to take excellent care of it. If God loves the world, then how might any person of faith be excused for not loving it or justified in destroying it?

Nils Peterson Poet Laureate of Santa Clara County (First)

Nan Swanson

Where Here Is

How will we know where here is
Until it tells us, until this oak speaks
Its story and these grasses whisper
What their mothers said to them
When they were seedlings? The crow
Overhead is not just a carrier of crowness. It speaks with the caw
Of its own life. The air about us
Is this air carrying smell messages
From the majesty of this place.
Knowing where here is---is paying back the world with our attention,
Not planting a heavy foot on the shore
Of the earth like a conquistador.

THE GREAT TURNING by Christine Fry Margaret Tompkins

You've asked me to tell you of The Great Turning, of how we saved the world from disaster.
The answer is both simple and complex.
We turned.

For hundreds of years we had turned away as life on earth grew more precarious.
We turned away from the homeless men on the streets, the stench from the river, the children orphaned in Iraq, the mothers dying of AIDS in Africa.

We turned away because that is what we had been taught.
To turn away, from our pain, from the hurt in another's eyes, from the drunken father or the friend betrayed.

Always we were told, in actions louder than words, to turn away, turn away. And so we became a lonely people caught up in a world moving too quickly, too mindlessly towards its own demise.

Until it seemed as if there was no safe place to turn. No place, inside or out, that did not remind us of fear or terror, despair and loss, anger and grief.

Yet on one of those days someone did turn.

Turned to face the pain. Turned to face the stranger. Tuned to look at the smoldering world and the hatred seething in too many eyes. Turned to face himself, herself.

And then another turned. And another. And another. And as they wept, they took each other's hands.

Until whole groups of people were turning. Young and old, gay and straight. People of all colors, all nations, all religions. Turning not only to the pain and hurt but to beauty, gratitude and love, Turning to one another with forgiveness and a longing for peace in their hearts...