

P.R.A.Y.

LCSB Caring for Creation Lent Programme 2022

WEEK THREE // WORKING WITH OTHERS TO BRING ABOUT CHANGE

INTRO

This week, we are thinking about what we can do as communities to change or reduce our impact on the environment. None of us can turn the tide of climate breakdown on our own. We need each other more than ever. This week is also an opportunity to reflect on how our decisions affect the lives of others who live on the other side of the world to us, and how creation connects us as human beings.

This resource includes a prayerful practice to help you reflect on this week's focus, and some practical options and actions that you might take. Please feel free to use what you want; to dip in and out; go at your own pace. You can do this exercise in one session, or come back to it for 5-10 mins each day, allowing the examen to open up new reflections each time. Read ahead before entering into prayer.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR THE WEEK

1. Think about how you can respect and protect green spaces. Look at the following sites for ideas on how to get involved in local groups; <http://www.fieldsintrust.org/>, <https://www.natfedparks.org.uk/>
2. Find a way to support green investments e.g. by churches or banks.

Given many talents, use them wisely and with integrity.

Whichever action you choose - whether one, both, or your own idea - keep it in mind as you work through this week's prayer activity.

UBUNTU EXAMEN

The *examen* is a spiritual practice created by priest and theologian St Ignatius of Loyola in the 16th century. It is a prayer of thankful reflection; a walk through your recent past with God, noticing and naming His presence in both joyful and difficult moments, and asking God to help you resolve how to live well in the future.

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This particular examen focusses on our interconnectedness to the world around us, and how God is present - or absent - in that connection. It is inspired by the concept of an Ubuntu way of life, followed by the Nguni people of South Africa, where every individual finds their place and sense of self through their connection with the wider community.

In dealing with climate and racial justice, ubuntu invites us to acknowledge and celebrate our interconnectedness, our interdependence in our shared humanity. [...] We strive for a prophetic imagination where climate justice and racial justice are fused together in the same longing, because it is eschatologically the desire of the divine being, our God, to see the Earth filled with His glory as the waters cover the sea.

- Dr Batanayi I. Manyika, Global Voices Webinar, 19 October 2021
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8NIUgJhRzjw>)

// PAUSE

In a position that is comfortable for you, bring your attention to your breath. Treat each breath as an arrival, settling into God's presence. As you breathe out, imagine letting go of future worries and responsibilities to God. When you are ready, begin to give God thanks for the diversity that you see in your own life, and the blessings that that brings.

You might want to use this breath prayer to help centre yourself:

[BREATHE IN]: All of creation is a song of praise to God.

[BREATHE OUT]: I am part of that creation.

// READ

Read Amos 5:21-24 and take a moment to reflect.

*"I hate, I despise your feasts,
and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.
Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings,
I will not accept them;
and the peace offerings of your fattened animals,
I will not look upon them.
Take away from me the noise of your songs;
to the melody of your harps I will not listen.
But let justice roll down like waters,
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.*

// ASK AND REFLECT

Ask God to lead you through this practice and to see things through His loving eyes.

Looking back, can you remember a time when you felt particularly connected to God and others through creation? What happened? Who was there? What were you feeling? Was diversity flourishing or lacking? Speak with God about what you see. Imagine yourself and God watching this moment together side by side.

// ASK AND REFLECT: PART 2

Now, can you remember a time when you felt disconnected; from God, from others, from creation? What happened? Who was there? What were you feeling? Was diversity flourishing or lacking? Ask, "Was I being led by fear, desire for control, entitlement, or by love, hope and humility? Did I relinquish control for the sake of others? Was space made for me?"

Speak to God about what you see. Acknowledge any discomfort you may be feeling. Lean into the difficult emotions and missed opportunities, and ask for God's forgiveness, or for healing.

// YIELD

Noticing and naming your deepest emotions, what is God saying? How is God asking you to reimagine your connection to others and to creation? How can your actions lead to others' and creation's freedom and flourishing?

Give thanks to God for this moment.