

DAY FOUR: MORNING

Earth as the Original Spiritual Directors

OPENING PRAYER

We pray today that we might open our hearts to listen to Earth's wisdom for us. Let the holy direction for our lives be revealed in the sky, sun, sea, and stone. O God of ancient Wisdom, help us attune to the gifts of water, wind, earth, and fire and the guidance they offer.

OPENING SONG

Blessing of the Elements

Chant: May the sacred Earth embrace you. May the sky help you fly. May the water bless and refresh you. May the fire of love ever guide you.

FIRST READING: SAINT JOHN OF THE CROSS

I was sad one day and went for a walk;
I sat in a field.

A rabbit noticed my condition and
came near.

It often does not take more than that to help at times —

to just be close to creatures who
are so full of knowing,
so full of love,
that they don't
— chat,

they just gaze with
their
marvelous understanding.

SUNG PSALM OPENING

O Grace, open my lips and my mouth will declare your praise. (Repeat)

PSALM 139

You are closer to me than I am, God.
You shine through my chaos and confusion
from my innermost self.
You know my weak points and my hurt places,
the habits I resort to and the goals that sustain me.
You well up in me.
You hold me in the palm of your hand.

I can't quite grasp this - it's just too big.
Understanding flits by in the corner of my mind
and is quickly gone.

You're in all of this from the big bang to
the outer edge of space and time.
You are the seed at my center from my birth to now
to my death and beyond.
Deep in every growing bone, every forming love,
every struggled thought.

There is nowhere that you that you are not.
Search me, try me, purify me.
Lead me to the way of Oneness with you.

SUNG DOXOLOGY

Glory to the Maker, Lover, and Keeper; as ago, in this breath, and will be ever. Amen, Amen.

SECOND READING: THOMAS MERTON

How necessary it is for monks to work in the fields, in the sun, in the mud, in the clay, in the wind: these are our spiritual directors and our novice-masters.

SILENT CONTEMPLATION

PRAYERS OF CONCERN

We offer prayers now for all that is on our hearts.

We pray for the humility to know that as human beings we do not have all the answers to the problems in our hearts and the problems of the world. Teach us to sit in silence and listen to the teachings of the elements and to the creatures who walk alongside us, sharing the planet we call home.

Sung Response - O God of Earth, we listen for your guidance.

We thank you for our companion animals, the joy of welcoming wagging tails and wet noses seeking our affection. Help us be humble enough to see your creatures as truly sentient beings, whose unconditional love reveals to us your heart.

Sung Response - O God of Earth, we listen for your guidance.

In times of grief or when our hearts and minds are perplexed or confused, may we find comfort and solace in the presence of trees, rocky valleys or sweet smelling meadows, allowing them to hold space for us and minister your grace to our hearts.

Sung Response - O God of Earth, we listen for your guidance.

Please add the prayers you are longing to express.

Sung Response - O God of Earth, we listen for your guidance.

CLOSING SONG

Canticle of Creation

Refrain: Praise be to you, my Lord you are, there you are.

CLOSING BLESSING

May everything in Creation
become a catalyst for your self-understanding.
Let the sacred whispers carried on the wind
invite you to release what is not necessary,
let the breezes help your wings to ascend,
the sparrows to remember your flock.
let the divine fire that burns in your heart
kindle you to deeper compassion,

sunlight to seek illumination
let the rivers and seas support you in allowing
Spirit to flow through your life in new ways,
embracing the rise and fall within you,
let the pine cones contain an epiphany
the forest asks you to embrace your truth once again,
and each smooth stone a revelation.
Let the moon sing of quiet miracles,
like those which reveal and conceal the world every day
right before your eyes.
May you make time to listen to the elements
in their wisdom, revealing the Holy One's face
and the sacred direction for your one precious life.

SUNG AMEN



CREDITS

All songs and texts used with permission

Opening Prayer written by Christine Valters Paintner

Opening Song: *Blessing of the Elements* by Betsey Beckman

First Reading from John of the Cross. Daniel Ladinsky, trans., *Love Poems from God: Twelve Sacred Voices from the East and the West*. New York: Penguin Books (2002) p. 323.

Sung Psalm Opening and Doxology by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

Interpretation of Psalm 139 by Rev. Christine Robinson

Second Reading from Thomas Merton. *The Sign of Jonas*. Harcourt Press (1981) p. 321.

Prayers of Concern written by Polly Burns

Sung Response by Betsey Beckman

Closing Song: *Canticle of Creation* by Simon de Voil

Closing Blessing: *Earth as the Original Spiritual Directors* written by Christine Valters Paintner

Please note: All of the Opening and Closing Songs are published on CDs in the Abbey of the Arts collection. In addition, these songs have accompanying gesture prayers and/or dances created by Betsey Beckman that can be found on the corresponding DVD (each album has a DVD companion). The Psalm Opening, Doxology, and the Response to the Prayers of Concern also have accompanying congregational gestures. The audio and video recordings of these are available at AbbeyoftheArts.com.

DAY FOUR: EVENING

Earth as the Original Spiritual Directors

OPENING PRAYER

Let us give thanks for all the ways we have been given guidance this day and steered in a holy direction. As evening comes, we listen to the gift of night's song and honor the wisdom we discover by paying close attention. May the great Spiritual Director continue to enliven and inspire our hearts, helping us to live in greater faithfulness to who we were created to be.

OPENING SONG

Seed of Life

Chant: Seed of life arise anew!

SUNG PSALM OPENING

O Grace, open my lips and my mouth will declare your praise. (Repeat)

PSALM 48

Praise the holy in the mountains
Beautiful and lofty—the joy of the earth.

We have waited there to sense your loving kindness
We have walked there in beauty
In the eternal mountains we see you
Silently giving direction for ever.

SUNG DOXOLOGY

Glory to the Maker, Lover, and Keeper; as ago, in this breath, and will be ever. Amen, Amen.

READING OF THE NIGHT: THOMAS MERTON

Let me seek, then, the gift of silence, and poverty, and solitude, where everything I touch is turned into prayer: where the sky is my prayer, the birds are my prayer, the wind in the trees is my prayer, for God is in all.

SILENT CONTEMPLATION

CLOSING POEM

I Greet the Muse

I met my muse today, a red tulip
with cherry lips open to the sun,
a chalice of daylight held up
to my thirsty mouth.

Another day she comes as the moon,
large marble making arcs above,
giving herself away until she's gone,
then returns, becoming seed
and slowly sending white blooms
into the night again.

Tomorrow she might arrive
on thunderous waves of the sea,
brine in my eyes and throat
or the soft caverns of shells strewn
on shore, a reminder
of the places I long to dwell

and one day she might land,
yellow bird on a branch,
her song calling me to look up,
glimpse the space between
her notes where the song lives,
where the silence speaks all
I need to hear.

CLOSING SONG

Deep Peace

Chant: Deep peace of the rolling waves to you. Deep peace of the quiet earth. Deep peace of the blowing air to you; deep peace of the silent stars. Let peace, let peace, let peace fill your soul. May peace, may peace, may peace keep you whole.



Credits:

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Opening Prayer written by Christine Valters Paintner

Opening Song: *Seed of Life* by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

Psalm Opening and Doxology by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

Interpretation of Psalm 48 by Rev. Christine Robinson

Reading of the Night from Thomas Merton, *Thoughts in Solitude*. New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux (1999)
p. 92.

Closing Poem by Christine Valters Paintner, *The Wisdom of Wild Grace*. Paraclete Press (2020).

Closing Song: *Deep Peace* by Sara Thomsen

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