

DAY THREE: MORNING

Earth as the Original Saints

OPENING PRAYER

Today we consider how Earth's creation lives so fully into its own calling, without forethought or anxiety. We ask that our own hearts be inspired to live fully as ourselves so that we might become the saints we were called to be.

OPENING SONG

The Horse and Saint Columba

Refrain: Everything must end, even this love, everything must end; they rest a moment there.

FIRST READING: THOMAS MERTON

The pale flowers of the dogwood outside this window are saints. . . the bass and trout hiding in the deep pools of the river are canonized by their beauty and their strength.

The lakes hidden among the hills are saints, and the sea too is a saint who praises God without interruption in her majestic dance. . . For me to be a saint means to be myself. Therefore the problem of sanctity and salvation is in fact the problem of finding out who I am and of discovering my true self. Trees and animals have no problem. God makes them what they are without consulting them, and they are perfectly satisfied. With us it is different. God leaves us free to be whatever we like. We can be ourselves or not, as we please. We are at liberty to be real, or to be unreal.

We may be true or false, the choice is ours.



SUNG PSALM OPENING

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

PSALM 104

I am awestruck, Holy One
at this beautiful and boundless universe—
gestated over eons with love and care.
Your creative intent envelops the world like a cloak.
I see it shining in the heavens, hear it whispering
in the winds, feel it crackling in the fire.
For you energized the dust of the universe—
the galaxies, the stars, the planets,
right down to this jewel of an earth.
You birthed her like a golden babe
from the fires under your heart.
She cooled, wrapped herself in water and in air.
The waters receded, the mountains rose
Storms shaped and softened the landscape
and in time, she gave birth to life in her seas.
In the eons life evolved into myriad forms
each with its own niche in your scheme.
With your love, she taught each its place, its work, its song.
And humankind—you birthed us too. Gave us
the world as our home and food--
bread to eat, wine to make our hearts glad, herbs for
healing, and oil to soothe our skin.
You gave us many songs, many powers, and put
a restlessness in our hearts
we could seek you always.

O Holy One, how manifold are your works.
In your love and play you have birthed them all
and raised them up.
I will sing your songs all my days
and care for all you have created
and keep my heart ever open to your Love.

SUNG DOXOLOGY

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

SECOND READING: MEISTER ECKHART

If I spent enough time with the tiniest creature –
even a caterpillar -
I would never have to prepare a sermon.
So full of God is every creature.

SILENT CONTEMPLATION

PRAYERS OF CONCERN

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

Creator God, forgive us when we do not recognise the other-than-human as fellow saints.
Forgive us for abusing and torturing these our brothers and sisters in research laboratories
and unethical ways of farming. Help us hear their cries and change our ways.

Sung Response - O God of Earth, guide us in our sanctity.

O Wise One, may we discover the deep wisdom your creatures have to teach us. May we
learn from them how to inhabit each moment and find our place in the cosmic dance of
reciprocity and renewal.

Sung Response - O God of Earth, guide us in our sanctity.

May we learn from your creatures how to fully be ourselves. Just as an oak tree lives fully as
an Oak, never wishing to be Holly or the Mountain Range does not try to change itself into a
River, may we find our true calling and sainthood in true self- acceptance, knowing that we
are made in your image.

Sung Response - O God of Earth, guide us in our sanctity.

Please add the prayers you are longing to express.

Sung Response - O God of Earth, guide us in our sanctity.

CLOSING SONG

May What I Do

Chant: May what I do flow from me like a river.

CLOSING BLESSING

Blessed are those who live themselves fully,
with no doubt or hesitation,
who know their sacred purpose like a hunger,
oak tree in her majesty,
owl in her night knowing,
stream in her quiet singing
marigolds with faces of joy.

May the fireflies light your way in the darkness,
may the morning glory spark gratitude for a new day,
may the witness of feather and hoof,
leaf and light, reveal to you what it means to be
truly, wholly, fully yourself,
breaking open the sacred seed planted within.

Cherish the badger who ambles across Earth,
the raven painting the sky,
the horse galloping over meadow,
see how they spark your own longing
to run or fly into the arms of yourself,
to know your name,
the one that has always been etched in your heart
from the very first moment.

SUNG AMEN



CREDITS

All songs and texts used with permission

Opening Prayer written by Christine Valters Paintner

Opening Song: *The Horse and Saint Columba* by Simon de Voil

First Reading from Thomas Merton. Quoted in *New Seeds of Contemplation*. New York: New Directions Books
(1961) p. 30-32.

Sung Psalm Opening and Doxology by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

Interpretation of Psalm 104 by Rev. Christine Robinson

Second Reading from Meister Eckhart. Quoted in Matthew Fox, *Meditations with Meister Eckhart*. Bear & Co
(1983) p. 14.

Prayers of Concern written by Polly Burns

Sung Response by Betsey Beckman

Closing Song: *May What I Do* by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

Closing Blessing: *Earth as the Original Saints* 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 THREE: EVENING

Earth as the Original Saints

OPENING PRAYER

Let us give thanks this day for the witness of Earth and her creatures for how to live fully into who we were created to be. As evening approaches, let us ponder how we refused our sacred calling today and how we embraced it. Give us strength Creator God, to live fully in your love.

OPENING SONG

Divine Fire

Chant: Fire, divine fire; fire, divine fire. We must kindle the divine fire within ourselves. O behold!

SUNG PSALM OPENING

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

PSALM 24

This world and its life are sacred;
the very flesh of the Holy One.
She birthed it, breathed her own life into it
set in motion the evolution of its life.

Who now can stand before her?
Those with open hearts
who love the truth and care for the world
They will be blessed.
Fling open the doors of your heart!
Open your being to God
You will know joy and peace.

SUNG DOXOLOGY

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

READING OF THE NIGHT: SAINT CUTHBERT

Let no one think it ridiculous to learn a lesson in virtue from birds.

Does not Solomon instruct us:

‘Go to the ant thou sluggard, consider her ways and be wise?’

SILENT CONTEMPLATION

CLOSING POEM

St. Cuthbert and the Otters

The saint stands immersed in the North Sea,
his nightly vigil, waves lap his beard,
offers prayers of wildness and wakefulness,
the moon is a communion wafer
floating across sky.

He smiles as curious seals swim past,
when dawn approaches, birds open
their beaks in song, land on his shoulders.

Each morning he steps back onto shore
with wrinkled toes, skin pale blue,
two otters scurry over,
warm him with fish-hued breath,
wrap themselves around his frigid feet,
until he can wiggle them again,

they beckon him to romp and frolic
and in the midst of this otter-saint
rumble-rumpus, lost in laughter,
he forgets himself, forgets the many
names of God, realizes
this too is a kind of prayer.

CLOSING SONG

Following the River Home

Refrain: Following, following the river home; we're following the river home.



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Opening Prayer written by Christine Valters Paintner

Opening Song: *Divine Fire* by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

Psalm Opening and Doxology by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

Interpretation of Psalm 24 by Rev. Christine Robinson

Reading of the Night from Saint Cuthbert. Quoted in Bede's *Sancti Cuthberti* 20 (John Francis Webb, translator)
Age of Bede, 69-70.

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

Closing Song: *Following the River Home* by Lorraine Bayes

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