



**Wisdom is a Tree of Life to Those Who Embrace Her
Earth Day 2016**

In the space for prayer are placed a dish of soil, an incense stick or wind chimes, a candle, a pitcher of water and a basin

Call to Prayer: the book of Proverbs tells us – Wisdom is a Tree of Life to those who embrace her, (3:18). The theme of Earth Day 2016 is **Trees for the Earth. Let's get planting.** The Company of Charity began in a culture that lived close to the ground and was in tune with the rhythms of nature and times of sowing and harvest. Ever dear to the memory of the Sisters and Daughters of Charity is wooded Saint Joseph's Valley in Emmitsburg. Earth Day this year calls us to consciously reclaim our intimate relationships with trees – a relationship that is as close as our next breath.

EARTH

Opening Song: Mother Earth, Our Mother Birthing
(Words: © Norman Habel 1999 Melody: Praise, my Soul, the King of Heaven)

1. Mother Earth, our mother birthing
Ev'ry creature from the ground.
Jesus too was flesh and breathing,
Kin to all that's green and brown.
Celebrate with all creation:
God has joined the web of life.

A participant holds up a dish of soil.

Reader 1: We give thanks for earth that we call our mother. She is the womb of life providing all we need. Her living soil feeds us; her rocks make our bones; her minerals are in our life's blood.

Reader 2: We give thanks for St. Vincent de Paul who grounded our charism in the good earth of service to God present in those made poor. May we sink our roots deeply into the good ground of that charism. Earth is sacred.

Reader 1: I invite you to press your feet into the ground beneath you and be conscious of Earth drawing you to itself and supporting you. Pray to be more firmly rooted in the Vincentian charism of Charity.

Pause for silent prayer

Reader 1: Let the energy of Charity root us!

All: Let the energy of Charity root us!

AIR

2. Sister Air, our sister lifting
Ev'ry creature born with wing;
Jesus shared the breath of forests,
Breath that makes our spirits sing.
Celebrate with all creation:
God has joined the web of life.

A participant lights incense or sounds a set of wind chimes.

Reader 1: We give thanks for air, though which we share in intimate communion with trees and all breathing things. Through air, the breath of God enters us. Through air, words of prayer and praise and prophecy come forth from us. Air is sacred.

Reader 2: We give thanks for St. Louise de Marillac, a beautiful breath of the Spirit. With her last breath she counseled us, "Take good care of the poor."

Reader 1: I invite you to breath deeply. Feel the oxygen, the gift of trees, filling your lungs. Feel the air that you send forth out of your lungs into the world. What energy do you want to send out into the world on this Earth Day? Pray for the whole Company of Charity that we might be an energy in the world of "good care for the poor," especially for our poor, broken planet.

Pause for Silent Prayer

Reader 1: Let the energy of Charity inspire us.
All: Let the energy of Charity inspire us.

FIRE

4. Father Fire, our father burning
With the sacred urge to live.
Jesus' death completes the cycle,
Bringing life beyond the grave.
Celebrate with all creation:
God has joined the web of life.

A participant lights a candle.

Reader 1: We give thanks for fire, the sun's gift that fuels all life on earth. This radiant heat and light is the source of energy for all beings, from the tiniest algae to the towering redwoods. We give thanks for every work of love and justice – all fueled by the fiery energy of the sun.

Reader 2: We give thanks for the fire of zeal and the sparks of creativity that filled St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. She bravely kindled the flame of Charity on the American continent and the world is radiant with her gift. What needs call for our creative spark now?

Pause for Silent Prayer

Reader 1: Let the energy of Charity impel us!
All: Let the energy of Charity impel us!

WATER

3. Brother Water, brother pulsing
Deep through ev'ry vein and sea,
Jesus drank the very raindrops
For our wine and in our tea.
Celebrate with all creation:
God has joined the web of life.

A participant invites the group to reverence water by either pouring water into a basin and sprinkling the group or invites the group to bless themselves or each other with the water.

Reader 1: We give thanks for the gift of water, for the oceans, home of life; for the clouds and rain that bring water to the land; for the springs that draw life-giving water up from the ground; for mighty rivers and majestic oceans.

Reader 2: We give thanks for all the members of the Company of Charity who traversed Earth's water in service of the mission. Women nourished by the springs of contemplation; women who poured the waters of healing; women who quenched the thirst for knowledge. Inspired by our foremothers, what obstacles are we called to face so that God's living waters may flow freely to quench the thirsts of our day and time?

Pause for silent prayer

Reader 1: Let the energy of Charity free us!

All: Let the Energy of Charity Free Us!

Reader 1: In the Charity tradition, prayer must bear fruit in action. Discuss with the others who joined you in prayer, how to plant some trees. The following websites provide information:

Arbor Day Foundation

<https://www.arborday.org/>

National Wildlife Foundation

<http://www.nwf.org/trees-for-wildlife/about/tree-bank-information.aspx>

Planting Memorial Trees in US National Forests

<http://thetreesremember.com/>

