

CREATING ONE NEW HUMANITY

EPH 2:15

THEME RESOURCES

*one wild and
precious life*

marist
ASSOCIATION OF
ST MARCELLIN CHAMPAGNAT

Creating one new humanity

Pope Francis challenged us not to keep giving 'answers to questions that no one is asking anymore' (Pope Francis, Medellin, Sept 2017). What are the questions, then, that people are asking? At a meeting recently with a group of Year 11 students, one student gave a simple yet somewhat surprising response to this question saying:

'For me, it's how can I live my life more meaningfully?'

What was most interesting about his response was the reaction he received from the other students who spontaneously smiled and nodded in agreement. Then, each student went on, one after another, to express in their own words how they too shared a desire to understand what this question meant for them.

Our theme this year is a response to this desire and it is expressed in some ways in the closing line of Mary Oliver's poem, 'The Summer Day':

'Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one, wild and precious life?'

At its heart, it is a question that invites us to look at who we are, the lives we are living, and our place in the world. Our response to this question can take us on a journey in search of understanding what brings greater freedom and wholeness in our lives, and who doesn't want that? It invites us at a deeper level to consider what it means to be truly human; the brevity, beauty and mystery of life. This has implications for how we live together, as we know that as human beings we are all interconnected. Scientists tell us that every molecule is connected in such a way, that any change, even in the slightest way to the smallest molecule, will impact the whole. This concept is really quite profound; who we are, and how we live, impacts the universe.

Through greater awareness of our place and interconnectedness within everything (including the galaxies and stars, earth, animals, plants and all human life), we are challenged to a new way of being and relating with each other, creation and God. **It calls for a renewed consciousness of our need for each other, of our responsibility to creation, and of our commitment to human dignity.** This is the vision St Paul expressed when he spoke to the community of Ephesus of Jesus' mission to break down all that divides for the *creation of one new humanity (Eph 2:15)*. It's about a new way of living together and of learning how to love.

This call to one new humanity is a deeply spiritual and personal call for each one of us. It is a journey of growing in our understanding of our known and yet mysterious universe, and in our understanding of God's great desire for us to be who we are called to be. It is a human journey of both risk and responsibility, of challenge and gift, of a life bursting with possibility and meaning. It is a journey where each one of us is invited to ponder what we can create in our response to the question, 'What is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?'



Anthony Clarke
Director | Marist Mission and Life Formation



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STUDENT REFLECTIONS AND PRAYERS

NAMES ARE IMPORTANT:

HONOURING ALL CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL IN CREATION

Introduction

We have not always valued, respected and taken care of the untold diversity of living creatures on the earth. These animals share the planet with us but unfortunately, many species have, over time, become extinct. It is important for us to appreciate their part in the ongoing evolution of the earth and appreciate their unique beauty and dignity.

Make the sign of the cross to begin prayer

A reading from the book of Genesis 1:24-25

And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so. God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

Humans have valued animals by giving them a name.

Play the following Youtube clip by Jason Mraz:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L1XadOZtScM>

Genesis 1:29-31

Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food." And it was so.

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.



Dear Lord

We pray for all your creatures; those who live on the land, under the seas and rivers and the birds of the air.

They are beautiful because they are part of your creation and all that you have created is "good".

May we be respectful of all animals, enjoy our interactions with them and work to protect those that face threat of extinction.

We ask this prayer in your name.

Amen

A PRAYER FOR OUR COMMON HOME

FREYA ZEMEK

Introduction

In 2015, Pope Francis wrote his encyclical *Laudato Si* on our care for our common home. In it, the Pope speaks passionately about the responsibility of all people to act in ways that will nurture and sustain our common home, the Earth. Today we pray in thanksgiving for the gift of our beautiful planet, and commit to being ongoing ambassadors in respecting, nurturing and caring for this precious gift.

"Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home. Each community can take from the bounty of the earth whatever it needs for subsistence, but it also has the duty to protect the earth and to ensure its fruitfulness for coming generations."

(Laudato Si, #13,67)

"And God saw all that he had made, and behold, it was very good."

(Genesis 1:31)

All: *God, source of all life, we thank you for the great gift of our Earth.*

Reader 1: Praise be to you, O Lord, for in your infinite goodness, you blessed us with an abundant and life-giving natural world and gave us the capacity to nurture it for generations to come. Thank you for enlivening us with your Spirit and light, for through this gift we are strengthened and renewed in our mission here on Earth.

All: *God, source of all life, we thank you for the great gift of our Earth.*

Reader 2: Inspired by the example of Pope Francis, grant us the humility to remember that we are but one part of a vast ecosystem, an integral ecology, all of which is precious in your eyes. Enriched as we are by faith, nourished as we are through the Eucharist, grant us the strength we need to be steadfast advocates for the voiceless, mindful of the intrinsic importance of every living thing on Earth.

All: *God, source of all life, we thank you for the great gift of our Earth.*

Reader 3: Endowed with a renewed understanding and appreciation of our Earth, we now have a responsibility to act. For just as we were baptised with living water and became ambassadors for Christ, through our ecological conversion we now become ambassadors for our Earth.

All: *God, source of all life, we thank you for the great gift of our Earth.*

Reader 4: May the rivers of knowledge flow on from within us as we continue to work towards an integral ecology. Empower us, O Lord, that we may recognise social and ecological injustice in our community and act decisively to create meaningful change.

All: *God, source of all life, we thank you for the great gift of our Earth.*

Leader: God of Love, our world is a wonderful place. May we remember to make choices that show Your love and care for each other and our world. We make our prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.

A MORNING PRAYER

JOSEPH ASTLEY

*Lord help me today to realise
That you will be speaking to me
Through the events of the day,
Through people, through things,
And through all creation.
Give me ears, eyes and heart
To perceive you,
However veiled your presence may be.
Give me insight
To see through the exterior of things
To the interior truth.
Give me the spirit of discernment.
O Lord, you know I will be distracted today.
If I forget you, do not forget me.*

Amen.



THE MANY NAMES OF GOD

Leader: God, we know you by many different names. Scripture speaks of the many titles You have - all which give us insight into the personable and loving God you are.

Let us take some time to reflect on who You are by reciting some familiar terms.

Reader 1: Loving God; God of Peace; Spirit Within; God our Hope.

(pause)

Reader 2: Teacher; Mystery; Loving Friend.

(pause)

Reader 3: God of Awe and Wonder; Creator God; Evening Warmth.

(pause)

Reader 4: Breath of the Cosmos; Heartbeat of the Universe; Holy Spirit.

(pause)

Reader 5: Gentle One; Everlasting Love; Servant; Gentle Whisper.

(pause)

Reader 6: Mother of Mercy; Mother of Justice; Source of our Life.

(pause)

Reader 7: Eternal Word.

(pause)

Leader: God of many names, You are with us. Stir our hearts and minds to see and hear You in all we do. Fill our lives with wonder and awe as we witness Your presence in all of creation.

Amen.



STAFF REFLECTIONS AND PRAYERS

THE SUMMER DAY

MARY OLIVER

Sign of the Cross

Who made the world?

Who made the swan, and the black bear?

Who made the grasshopper?

This grasshopper, I mean-

the one who has flung herself out of the grass,

the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,

who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down-

who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.

Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.

Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.

I don't know exactly what a prayer is.

I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down

into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,

how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,

which is what I have been doing all day.

Tell me, what else should I have done?

Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?

**Tell me, what is it you plan to do
with your one wild and precious life?**

(Take a moment to pause and reflect)

Amen.



ONE HUMANITY. ONE PEACE. ONE CHRIST.

EPH 2:12-25

Gathering Prayer

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Lord, we ask for your guidance and grace to be with us today.

Help open our minds and hearts to be still to hear your word.

We ask your blessings on our community, and that it unites around the life giving possibilities that union in Christ Jesus allows.

Amen.

A Reading from Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 2: 12-15

*Remember that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our **PEACE**; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself **one new humanity** in place of the two, thus making **PEACE**.*

Spend a moment in reflection re-reading the bible passage focusing your eyes on a **word or a line** that grabs your attention.

Reflection

In Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, he is addressing the divide between Jews and Gentiles but there is another deeper layer of meaning he is writing about in this letter. God has come into the world through the incarnation of Jesus to bring peace to all people on earth, regardless of religion or cultural background. The hope of the resurrection for all people becomes a reality on earth when the walls of division and hostility are broken down. In this process, a new humanity or world is created based on the quality of peace between all people.

Sister Verna Holyhead says the wall is a provocative symbol of the division Paul speaks of in Ephesians, and the ongoing challenge is to build peace and liberty in its place. Sadly, she says today there are so many walls that continue to divide in our world. Christ calls each one of his followers to the ministry of reconciliation, peacemaking and inclusion of the 'other', your neighbour, and in the process break down the barriers of race, gender, social status and any other barrier that creates divisions between God and God's love for his people.

Concluding Prayer

God of Peace,

Breathe your spirit into our world and

renew the face of this earth;

One planet, one universe, one creation.

Help us to break down the walls of division and hostility,

and in its place sow a deep and lasting love

that restores all people to work towards reconciliation as one humanity.

We ask this prayer through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

(References: Michael Coffey's blog and Sowing the Seed – Welcoming the Word in Year B, Verna A. Holyhead, Liturgical Press 2008)



RECOGNISING GOD IN THE DREAMTIME

(From Pope JP II address in Alice Springs 1986)

Make the sign of the cross to begin prayer

Reader 1: For thousands of years you have lived in this land and fashioned a culture that endures to this day. And during all this time, the Spirit of God has been with you. Your "*Dreaming*," which influences your lives so strongly that, no matter what happens, you remain forever people of your culture, is your only way of touching the mystery of God's Spirit in you and in creation.

(short pause)

All: ***You must keep your striving for God and hold on to it in your lives...***

Reader 2: For thousands of years this culture of yours was free to grow without interference by people from other places. You lived your lives in spiritual closeness to the land, with its animals, birds, fishes, waterholes, rivers, hills and mountains. Through your closeness to the land you touched the sacredness of man's relationship with God for the land was the proof of a power in life greater than yourselves. You did not spoil the land, use it up, exhaust it and then walk away from it.

All: ***You realised that your land was related to the source of life.***

Reader 3: The silence of the Bush taught you a quietness of soul that put you in touch with another world, the world of God's Spirit. Your careful attention to the details of kinship spoke of your reverence for birth, life and human generation. You knew that children need to be loved, to be full of joy.

All: ***They need a time to grow in laughter and to play, secure in the knowledge that they belong to their people....***

Reader 4: Some of the stories from your Dreamtime legends speak powerfully of the great mysteries of human life, its frailty, its need for help, its closeness to spiritual powers and the value of the human person. They are not unlike some of the great inspired lessons from the people among whom Jesus himself was born.

All: ***It is wonderful to see how people, as they accept the Gospel of Jesus, find points of agreement between their own traditions and those of Jesus and his people.***

Amen.

HYMN OF THE UNIVERSE
PIERRE TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, S.J.

GLORIOUS LORD CHRIST:

THE DIVINE INFLUENCE SECRETLY DIFFUSED
AND ACTIVE IN THE DEPTHS OF MATTER,

AND THE DAZZLING CENTRE WHERE
ALL THE INNUMERABLE FIBRES OF THE
MANIFOLD MEET;

POWER AS IMPLACABLE AS THE WORLD
AND AS WARM AS LIFE;

YOU WHOSE FOREHEAD IS OF THE
WHITENESS OF SNOW,

WHOSE EYES ARE OF FIRE,

AND WHOSE FEET ARE BRIGHTER THAN
MOLTEN GOLD; YOU WHOSE HANDS
IMPRISON THE STARS;

YOU WHO ARE THE FIRST AND THE LAST,

THE LIVING AND THE DEAD
AND THE RISEN AGAIN;

YOU WHO GATHER INTO YOUR EXUBERANT
UNITY EVERY MODE OF EXISTENCE;

IT IS YOU TO WHOM MY BEING CRIED OUT
WITH A DESIRE AS VAST AS THE UNIVERSE:

IN TRUTH YOU ARE MY LORD AND MY GOD.

AMEN.



Photography

REFLECTION

Winning and shortlisted images have been announced for the 2019 Portrait of Humanity award, a new photography prize run by the British Journal of Photography and Magnum Photos *intended to celebrate the diversity of human life.*

The competition is open to photographers working at any level, anywhere in the world, with the winning portraits **showing that there is more that brings us together than sets us apart.**

The 200 shortlisted portraits will be featured in the Portrait of Humanity book, published by Hoxton Mini Press and distributed worldwide.

The following photos are some of the finalists.

Using one or more of these photos as a stimulus for reflection; look at the image, read the text and ask yourself:

What kind of humanity am I being asked to imagine?

WHAT KIND OF HUMANITY AM I BEING ASKED TO IMAGINE?



© Abbie Trayler-Smith, Fleeing Mosul, Iraq. After a nine-month battle, ISIS was expelled from Mosul in early 2017. I noticed Sara looking out of a window as the bus she was on pulled into the refugee camp. The look on her face summed up the global uncertainty that seemed to be everywhere. And yet, despite the death and destruction, the human spirit is resilient and lives on.

Fleeing Mosul, Iraq

WHAT KIND OF HUMANITY AM I BEING ASKED TO IMAGINE?



© Todd Antony, Junichi Tajima, Japan. The Japanese subculture of dekotora, meaning 'decorated trucks', stems from the 1970s Torakku Yaro ('truck guys') films. Junichi Tajima is the head of Utamaro Kai, a dekotora association. He said that with the right truck a driver can make even dark times feel bright.

Junichi Tajima, Japan

WHAT KIND OF HUMANITY AM I BEING ASKED TO IMAGINE?



© Federico Redin, Beauty Centre, Uganda. A hairdresser works on the balcony of a commercial building while her clients relax. Competition for trading space in central Kampala is fierce.

Beauty Centre, Uganda

WHAT KIND OF HUMANITY AM I BEING ASKED TO IMAGINE?



© Jørn Tomter. The Ghanaian Astronaut, UK. Wunnam is a pupil at Kingsmead Primary School in Hackney. The photo is part of a series of portraits of children dressed as astronauts. There is no more powerful fuel on the planet than a kid's imagination.

The Ghanaian Astronaut, UK

WHAT KIND OF HUMANITY AM I BEING ASKED TO IMAGINE?



© Giulia Frigieri, Surfing Iran, Iran. Since 2013, Shahla Yasini has been challenging stereotypes of Middle Eastern women by pioneering the surfing scene in southeast Iran. She represents a new Iranian youth who are proud, courageous and ready to fight for their freedom.

Surfing Iran, Iran



SCRIPTURE / MARIST SPIRITUALITY TEXTS

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 1:1-5,9-12

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was a formless void, there was darkness over the deep, and God's spirit hovered over the water. God said, 'Let there be light', and there was light. God saw that light was good, and God divided light from darkness. God called light 'day', and darkness he called 'night.'

And God said, 'Let the waters under heaven come together into a single mass, and let dry land appear.' And so it was. God called the dry land 'earth' and the mass of waters 'seas', and God saw that it was good.

God said, 'Let the earth produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants, and fruit trees bearing fruit with their seed inside, on the earth.' And so it was. The earth produced vegetation: plants bearing seed in their several kinds, and trees bearing fruit with their seed inside in their several kinds.

And God saw that it was good.

Book of Wisdom 11:24-26-12:1

For you love all things that exist and
detest none of the things that you have made,
For you would not have made anything if you had hated it.
How would anything have endured if you had not willed it?
Or how would anything not called forth by you have been preserved?
You spare all things, for they are yours, O Lord, you who love the living.
For your immortal Spirit is in all things.

Job 12:7-10

But ask the animals, and they will teach you;
the birds of the air, and they will tell you;
ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you;
and the fish of the sea will declare to you.
Who among all these does not know
that the hand of the Lord has done this?
In his hand is the life of every living thing and
the breath of every human being.

Ephesians 2:13-18

In Christ Jesus, you that used to be so far apart from us have been brought very close, by the blood of Christ. For he is the peace between us, and has made the two into one and broken down the barrier which used to keep them apart, actually destroying in his own person the hostility caused by the rules and decrees of the Law. This was to create one single New Man in himself out of the two of them and by restoring peace through the cross, to unite them both in a single Body and reconcile them with God: in his own person he killed the hostility. Later he came to bring the good news of peace, peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near at hand. Through him, both of us have in the one Spirit our way to come to the Father.



Psalm 145:1-2,8-11

R. The Lord is compassionate to all his creatures.

I will give you glory, O God my king,
I will bless your name for ever.
I will bless you day after day
and praise your name for ever.

R. The Lord is compassionate to all his creatures.

The Lord is kind and full of compassion,
slow to anger, abounding in love.
How good is the Lord to all,
compassionate to all his creatures.

R. The Lord is compassionate to all his creatures.

All your creatures shall thank you, O Lord,
and your friends shall repeat their blessing.
They shall speak of the glory of your reign
and declare your might, O God.

R. The Lord is compassionate to all his creatures.

Matthew 6:24-34

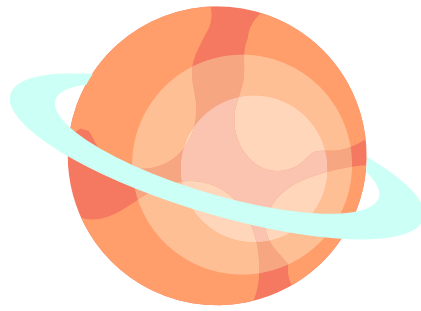
Jesus said to his disciples: 'No one can be the slave of two masters: he will either hate the first and love the second, or treat the first with respect and the second with scorn. You cannot be the slave both of God and of money.

'That is why I am telling you not to worry about your life and what you are to eat, nor about your body and how you are to clothe it. Surely life means more than food, and the body more than clothing! Look at the birds in the sky. They do not sow or reap or gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they are? Can any of you, for all his worrying, add one single cubit to his span of life? And why worry about clothing? Think of the flowers growing in the fields; they never have to work or spin; yet I assure you that not even Solomon in all his regalia was robed like one of these. Now if that is how God clothes the grass in the field which is there today and thrown into the furnace tomorrow, will he not much more look after you, you men of little faith? So do not worry; do not say, "What are we to eat? What are we to drink? How are we to be clothed?" It is the pagans who set their hearts on all these things. Your heavenly Father knows you need them all. Set your hearts on his kingdom first, and on his righteousness, and all these other things will be given you as well. So do not worry about tomorrow: tomorrow will take care of itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.'



WATER FROM THE ROCK

- #1 The story of our spirituality is one of passion and compassion, passion for God and compassion for people.
- #28 Since the time of Marcellin, his disciples have made Mary known and loved. Today we continue to be convinced that to follow Jesus in the way of Mary is a privileged way of bringing our Christian journey to fullness. With a heart filled with compassion, we share this experience and conviction with children and youth helping them to experience the maternal face of the Church.
- #32 Wherever the followers of Marcellin are present, working together in mission, this “family spirit” is the Marist way of communal living. Its well-spring is the love that Jesus has for all his brothers and sisters – all of humanity. Through this spirit we offer an experience of belonging and union in mission.
- #38 This same spirit encourages us to develop a simple style of life. This implies that we avoid consumerism, with its accumulation of disposable goods and wasteful use of resources. We choose to be responsible for creation, a precious gift of God to humanity. This attitude encourages us to join with others in actions necessary to preserve our environment, to enhance the harmony between humanity and nature, and to collaborate with the Creator in bringing creation to its fullness.
- #58 By entering into the fullness of such moments we discover our true humanity and the depth of our relationship with God. As we live within this relationship we come to know our true identity – sons and daughters of God, brothers and sisters in life.
- #59 In our times of solitude, we cultivate an interior life that strengthens our love of, and communion with, the world. In this way we become more sensitive to life. Though we experience the poverty of our limitations and failures, we also recognize the beauty and wonder of humanity and of all creation.
- #124 Marist spirituality, being apostolic, is lived out on mission. The mission of Marist apostles is born of the experience of being loved by God and of our desire to actively participate in the mission of Jesus. God is passionate about the world and its people, and Jesus expresses this love by a ministry of teaching and healing. I came that you may have life, and have it abundantly (Jn 10:10). Like Jesus we recognise the urgings of the Spirit within, calling us to witness to this Good News. Out of these inner promptings, the mission of the Church is born: to proclaim the Kingdom of God as a new way of living for humanity, a new way to relate with God. We join in this mission of the Church as we look upon the world with compassion.



FURTHER RESOURCES

SUGGESTED READINGS

Devotions: The Selected Poems of Mary Oliver by Mary Oliver
Penguin Press, 2017.

100 Poems by Seamus Heaney
Faber and Faber, 2018.

Creating a Life: Finding Your Individual Path by James Hollis
Inner City Books, 2001.

The Joy of God: Collected Writings Sister Mary David
Bloomsbury, 2019.

Anthropology – Seeking Light and Beauty by Susan A. Ross
A Michael Glazier Book, 2019.

The Christian Vision of Humanity by John R. Sachs
A Michael Glazier Book, 1991.

The Splash of Words – Believing in Poetry by Mark Oakley
Canterbury Press, 2016.

An Astonishing Secret: The Love Story of Creation and the Wonder of You by Daniel O’Leary
Garratt Publishing, 2018.

Making All Things New – Catholicity, Cosmology, Consciousness by Ilio Delio
Orbis Books, 2015.

The Universal Christ by Richard Rohr.
SPCK, 2019.

PODCASTS

Another Name for Every Thing — A Podcast with Richard Rohr
[Link](#)

WEBSITES

Weekly reflections from Fr Daniel O’Leary
[Link](#)

An Astonishing Secret resources based on book by Fr Daniel O’Leary
[Link](#)

Laudato Si’ - On Care for the Common Home encyclical letter - Pope Francis
[Link](#)

The Universal Christ resource collection based on Richard Rohr’s book
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