

A Nature Liturgy

Holy Saturday

April 20, 2019

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It is normal to feel helpless at times throughout our lives. Sadly, for many people today, this feeling of helplessness sticks around much longer than necessary. Many today get so depressed and nothing can seem to shake it. Maybe this is due to high standards we place upon ourselves, the peer pressure through social media that makes us feel worthless, or just being part of an emotionally weaker generation than our parents and grandparent's generations. Whatever the cause, this feeling of constant helplessness is a problem.

One of the greatest cures for helplessness is nature.

Tonight's liturgy, out of all the liturgies of the year, is almost like a nature walk. We started in darkness with fire outside. Next, we heard the creation story (*Genesis*). Then, we heard about fleeing a predator by moving through a river (*Exodus*) and clean water being sprinkled upon us (*Ezekiel*). We talked about burial in the earth (*Romans*) and spices for anointing (*Luke*). Throughout the rest of this mass, we will also use water (*Baptism*), oil (*Confirmation*), bread (*Body of Christ*), and wine (*Blood of Christ*). It seems like this liturgy is more about creation itself than about us...and that is healing. Nature moves ahead and takes care of itself. It has been doing so for billions of years!

The Passionist priest and eco-theologian Thomas Berry believes that being in touch with nature can give us, the human species, hope. He says, The basic mood of the future might well be one of confidence in the continuing revelation that takes place in and through the Earth.

If the dynamics of the Universe from the beginning shaped the course of the heavens, lighted the Sun, and formed the Earth, if this same dynamic brought forth the continents and seas and atmosphere, if it awakened life in the primordial cell and then brought into being the unnumbered variety of living beings, and finally brought us into being and guided us safely through the turbulent centuries, there is reason to believe that this same guiding process is precisely what has awakened in us our present understanding of ourselves and our relation to this stupendous process. Sensitized to such guidance from the very structure and functioning of the Universe, we can have confidence in the future that awaits the human venture.

So, feeling helpless? Take a cue from nature tonight.