



Gather in the Garden



Quiet Gardens

Recognizing the need for each person to have somewhere beautiful to go for prayer and reflection, Reverend Philip Roderick established the Quiet Garden Trust. His idea has spawned a worldwide network of "quiet gardens" that include private homes, retreat centers, and organic farms. Each is open to those seeking a place to contemplate the beauty and goodness of God's creation. For information on this project visit www.quietgarden.co.uk.

Praying in the Garden



In the gospel of Mark, there is a wonderful passage in which Jesus recognizes the weariness of his disciples. He issues an invitation that is both considerate and enticing: "Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest awhile" (Mark 6:30). Who of us would not welcome such an invitation, especially after a hard day's work?

A garden epitomizes the kind of quiet place to which Jesus calls us. There, surrounded by the sights, smells, and sounds of nature, we can find rest and renewal. Jesus often took time to withdraw to places of solitude in order to spend time in prayer. He expected us to do the same, knowing that prayer provides a wellspring of life and grace, one that replenishes our drooping spirits.

Even if we do not have a garden of our own, there are many places to which we can withdraw for prayer. Strolling in a neighborhood park, visiting a local arboretum, taking a trip to the zoo, or sitting by a pond are all experiences that contain ample evidence of God's creativity and beauty. We can create interior gardens as well by simply lighting a candle, arranging a vase of flowers, or watching a goldfish swim around its bowl. Each is a peace-inducing exercise that quiets the internal voices and draws us into the silent spaces that are conducive to prayer.

By yourself, or with other members of your household, list possible "quiet places" where you can withdraw to pray. Schedule time within the next week to visit one of these places in order to make prayer a more intentional part of your life.

Saint Francis of Assisi, Steward of God's Creation

Saint Francis was the son of a rich merchant. In his twenties, Francis felt God calling him to a different way of life. Francis gave up his wealth and began to live a simple, poor life. He fasted, prayed, and helped the poor. In 1210 Francis began a religious community now known as the Franciscans.

Francis is known for his great love of God's creation. We celebrate his feast day on October 4th. On this day, many parishes offer a special blessing for pets and other animals.

(Adapted from *We Believe*, Grade 3, Student Edition)



A Prayer for Animals

Hear our humble prayer, O God, for our friends the animals, your creatures.

For those who deal with them we ask a heart of compassion, gentle hands and kindly words. Make us all true friends to animals and worthy followers of our merciful Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers.

Everyday Ways to Help the Environment

1. Use old clothes and cloth for cleaning instead of paper towels.
2. Lower thermostat one degree for every hour you will be away or asleep.
3. Return reusable items to merchants (e.g., plastic and rubber pots to nursery; hangers to dry cleaners).
4. Replace incandescent bulbs with energy-efficient bulbs.

Renewing the Face of the Earth: A Resource for Parishes.

A Time-line of Creation

The following time-line is meant to help us see how vast and mysterious is God's creation and to understand better our place as humans within creation...

- ◆ 15 billion years ago – God created the universe.
- ◆ 5 billion years ago – The Earth and its solar system emerged.
- ◆ 3 and 1/2 billion years ago – Life emerged in simple bacteria.
- ◆ 800 million years ago – Multi-cellular life emerged.
- ◆ 520 million years ago – The first fish emerged.
- ◆ 420 million years ago – The first land plants appeared.
- ◆ 360 million years ago – The first insects came to be.
- ◆ 220 million years ago – The first mammals emerged.
- ◆ 180 million years ago – The first birds took flight.
- ◆ 130 million years ago – The first flowering plants appeared.
- ◆ 80 million years ago – Dinosaurs became extinct.
- ◆ 100,000 years ago – Homo Sapiens emerged in Africa.
- ◆ 10,000 years ago – The last ice age occurred; agriculture began.
- ◆ 2,000 years ago – Jesus of Nazareth was born!
- ◆ 200 years ago – The Industrial Revolution began.
- ◆ 57 years ago – The atom was split.
- ◆ 35 years ago – The first human stepped on the moon.

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