

Nature Day of Reflection

The place of God's People, Israel, and Empire

Pope Francis reminds us that God's Word is alive, ever new with a freshness for new times and new places.

From the perspective of broken places, particularly those places treated like throwaway regions or sacrifice zones, insights from scripture appear in new light.



Many of us are starting to see that the Bible presents a story of the wisdom of the whole of God's *creation*, of humanity's connection with all other life, and of our need to live humbly, rooted in distinct places and within certain biological limitations. But Scripture also reveals *sin* to us, our tendency to stray from that story as time and time again we humans choose to live beyond our limits and dominate creation and one another. And finally, scripture points to the possibility of *re-creation*, of *re-memembering*, of *redemption*. It calls human persons and communities to take our proper places in the story, knitting back together the one Body of creation and living humbly within the web of life.

*Excerpt from The Tellings Takes us Home- a pastoral letter from the Catholic Committee of Appalachia on care for their home and community. |

Song for Autumn by Mary Oliver

Don't you imagine the leaves dream now how comfortable it will be to touch the earth instead of the nothingness of the air and the endless freshets of wind? And don't you think the trees, especially those with mossy hollows, are beginning to look for

the birds that will come—six, a dozen—to sleep inside their bodies? And don't you hear the goldenrod whispering goodbye, the everlasting being crowned with the first tufts of snow? The pond stiffens and the white field over which the fox runs so quickly brings out its long blue shadows. The wind wags its many tails. And in the evening the piled firewood shifts a little, longing to be on its way.

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Morning Poem

Every morning
the world
is created.
Under the orange

sticks of the sun
the heaped
ashes of the night
turn into leaves again

and fasten themselves to the high branches
—

and the ponds appear
like black cloth
on which are painted islands



of summer lilies.
If it is your nature
to be happy
you will swim away along the soft trails

for hours, your imagination
alighting everywhere.
And if your spirit
carries within it

the thorn
that is heavier than lead —
if it's all you can do
to keep on trudging —

there is still
somewhere deep within you
a beast shouting that the earth
is exactly what it wanted —

each pond with its blazing lilies
is a prayer heard and answered
lavishly,
every morning,

whether or not
you have ever dared to be happy,
whether or not
you have ever dared to pray.
from Dream Work (1986) by Mary Oliver

