



Where Justice and Truth Meet

April 2013

Dominican Resources for Earth Day

April 22 marks the annual celebration of Earth Day throughout the world. The Dominican Sisters of Peace Eco-Justice Committee has prepared a collection of prayers and activities that invite us to enter the celebration in as many ways as possible. Our responsibility towards Earth and all its inhabitants is deeply embedded in the recognition that we are all connected as one family sprung from Divine Creativity. Everything we are, everything we can do, everything that surrounds us and is beyond us supports our very lives. These resources can be adapted to many circumstances—from small children to mature adults, alone and in communal settings. Though **April 22, 2013** is the “official” day set aside to celebrate Earth Day, you may choose *any* day, or *week* or *lifetime* to celebrate because “*every day is Earth Day.*” We hope these suggestions will invite you to experience *that* truth.



ACTIVITIES: Suggestions that you can do on your own or with a group: family, community, class, etc. Choose one or *some* or try them all.

Experience Earth Elements

| | |
|-------|--------------|
| Earth | Sun |
| Rain | Wind |
| Sky | 4 Directions |



Things to Do to Connect

- Make muffins (try these yummy recipes!)
- Have a special meal

Action, Service, Witness

- **Plant** a tree; vegetable garden; flowers
- **Clean** up trash on your street
- **Wear** green or brown or both on the day you celebrate

EARTH DAY QUIZ: See how you do...

The habits of individuals can make a difference in conserving our resources, and Earth Day is a good time to test your energy savvy.

Did you know, for example, that if we all checked our tire pressure once a month and drove with properly inflated tires, we would save the amount of oil spilled in Prince William Sound in less than three days?

Take the quiz. If you're surprised by some of the answers, set a goal of changing some of those energy-guzzling habits.

PRAYER AND READINGS

- [An Earth Day prayer service](#)
- [Readings](#)

Remember that
every day
is Earth Day!



Close Encounters with Our Kinship:

A Theological Reflection

Arlene Flaherty, OP (Blauvelt) shares her experience, analysis (a reading of the signs of our times), and faith reflection on our kinship with Earth. Her reflection on a close encounter with a pair of mockingbirds leads her to ask



what this encounter might have to say to us as we consider our actions to protect our kin, planet Earth, from the harm that threatens her life? What are the threats to Earth today?

What do they have to do with the well-being of humanity and the many diverse communities of life that depend on the planet for life?

Included are action steps that can help us deepen and live out our sense of kinship with the Earth, as well as quotes for further reflection.

Read the [complete reflection](#).

50 Years Ago, April 1963: *Pacem in Terris*

Just over 50 years ago, in October 1962, the world was on the verge of nuclear war as the Cuban missile crisis pitted the U.S. against the Soviet Union. In a letter to President John F. Kennedy and Premier Nikita Krushchev, Pope John XXIII pleaded with them, "*We beg all governments not to remain deaf to this cry of humanity. That they do all that is in their power to save peace. They will thus spare the world from the horrors of a war whose terrifying consequences no one can predict.*"

Just a few months later in April 1963, Pope John issued his prophetic encyclical, *Pacem in Terris*.

Today our news reports are filled again with threats of nuclear war. Pope John's words are just as necessary today, on the 50th anniversary of the document: "*Disagreements must be settled, not by force ... but rather in the only manner which is worthy of the dignity of humanity, that is, by a mutual assessment of the reasons on both sides of the dispute, by a mature and objective investigation of the situation, and by an equitable reconciliation of differences of opinion.*"

Indeed today as then, Pope John's message rings true: solid and true peace will be born when human rights are universally respected, and when equality of arms is replaced with "*mutual trust alone.*"

Thoughts to Ponder

- "The whole evolutionary creation is a Divine milieu pregnant with God." *Pierre Teilhard de Chardin*
- "The ecological crisis is a moral issue." *John Paul II*
- "The contemplative gaze renders the whole world sacramental." *Elizabeth Johnson, csj*
- "Prayer is our personal and collective preparation for acting in solidarity and respect, for awakening feelings of tenderness and compassion for persons and for all living things." *Ivone Gebara*
- "All social justice issues have ecological implications...The cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor are one." *Canadian Conference of Bishops*
- "This we know. The earth does not belong to people. People belong to the earth. All things are connected. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the people of the earth." *Chief Seattle*
- "When you act on behalf of something greater than yourself, you begin to feel it acting through you with a power that is greater than your own." *Joanna Macy*



50 Years Ago, April 1963: *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere," wrote Martin Luther King, Jr. from a Birmingham jail cell 50 years ago this month.

"Though I was initially disappointed at being categorized as an extremist, as I continued to think about the matter I gradually gained a measure of satisfaction from the label...Was not Jesus an extremist for love, truth and goodness... The question is not whether we will be extremists, but what kind of extremists we will be.... the world [is] in dire need of creative extremists."

What kind of extremist are you?