



Preparing our Hearts...

A Prayer for Joy in God's Creation.

O heavenly Father, you have filled the world with beauty: Open our eyes to behold your gracious hand in all your works; that, rejoicing in your whole creation, we may learn to serve you with gladness; for the sake of him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Source: Book of Common Prayer)

How are you feeling today (physically, emotionally, spiritually)?

Be honest with God about where you are before Him right at this moment. Hold what comes to you for a minute and ask Him how to respond. Take a moment to make a confession before God. If it weighs on your soul, now is the time to talk to Him about it.

Tell him, knowing that you can cast all your cares on him because he cares for you (1 Peter 5:7). He is asking you to come to him, all you who are weary and heavy-laden, he will give you rest for his yoke is easy, his burden is light (Matt 11:28). Remembering always, even in the midst of our own brokenness, that, "*neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God*" (Romans 8:39).

As you begin:

Consider Creation, represented in all that you see, and God's authorship of it.
Why would God make it beautiful? What does it say about the way He loves us?
What about the way He loves you personally?

"God saw all that he had made, and it was very good." Genesis 1:31

Praise:

Psalm 104:24, 30-34

How many are your works, Lord! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures...

When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground.

May the glory of the Lord endure forever, may the Lord rejoice in his works— he who looks at the earth, and it trembles, who touches the mountains, and they smoke. I will sing to the Lord all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live. May my meditation be pleasing to him, as I rejoice in the Lord.

Like the Psalmist, thank the Lord for some of the beautiful, diverse things you see. Rejoice and be glad in them. Notice what they might reveal to you about God.

Where do you notice the beauty?



Rest:

“...look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls.” Jeremiah 6:16

Return, O my soul, to your rest; for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you. Psalm 116:7

Find rest and peace in this time with God.

When you start to draw your walk to a close, sit with God beside you for a moment. Let God speak his peace over you through his very good, very beautiful Creation, which includes you.

Thank the Lord for His presence with you and to ask the Holy Spirit to guide this closing time of reflection and prayer. Thank Him, in advance, for the wisdom and insight He promises to give us when we come to Him in prayer (Jeremiah 29:13; James 1:5).

Reflection Questions:

What natural objects, plants, animals, weather, and physical features caught your attention?

Is there something particular you are feeling grateful for right now?

Where have you noticed or seen or felt God around you?

Did you feel barriers to anything you encountered today? Any walls that went up?

Did God speak to you today or show you something? What did he say? What did he show you?

A Prayer as you go...
O God, enlarge within us
the sense of fellowship
with all living things,
our brothers the animals
to whom thou gavest the
earth as their home in
common with us.
We remember with
shame that in the past we
have exercised the high
dominion of man with
ruthless cruelty so that
the voice of the earth,
which should have gone
up to thee in song, has
been a groan of travail.
May we realize that they
live not for us alone but
for themselves and for
thee, and that they love
the sweetness of life.
—St. Basil the Great