

**Reader:** *A Good News Story*

In October 2004 NGOs around the world engaged in a massive letter writing campaign to the Vatican to prevent its endorsement of GE crops. The just released Vatican report states that GE crops should not be spread unless they are conclusively proven to be safe for human health and for the environment.

The Vatican elaborates on that point, indicating that the Church does not believe adequate testing of GE crops has been done. The report says, "Available scientific data are contradictory or quantitatively scarce. It may then be appropriate to base evaluations on the precautionary principle."

**Leader:** Let us listen to this reflective song as a response to the reading.

*The Good Earth* by Neil Murray on *Dust*, ABC Music 1996

or

*For the Beauty of the Earth* from The John Rutter Collection on *For the Beauty of the Earth*, Universal Classics and Jazz, UK 2002

Spend some time thinking of one action you can take to be a "good news" Earth person. You might like to share your idea with the group.

**Prayer:** *Psalms 96: 11-13*

*Be glad earth and sky!  
Roar sea, and every creature in you;  
be glad fields, and everything in you!  
The trees in the woods will shout for joy  
when the Lord comes to rule the earth  
He will rule the peoples of the world with justice and fairness.*



**Reader:** *Humanity is part of a vast evolving universe. Earth, our home, is alive with a unique community of life.*

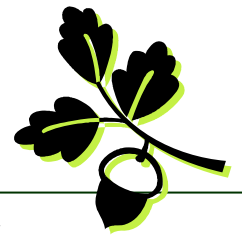
*The forces of nature make existence a demanding and uncertain adventure, but Earth has provided the conditions for life's evolution.*

*The resilience of the community of life and the well-being of humanity depend upon preserving a healthy biosphere with all its ecological systems, a rich variety of plants, animals, fertile soils, pure waters and fresh air. The global environment with its finite resources is a common concern for all peoples. The protection of Earth's vitality, diversity and beauty is a sacred trust.*

*The Earth Charter  
Preamble*

This prayer/reflection has been prepared  
by the Presentation Society Justice Committee, April 2005

*Leader: Let us spend 10 minutes reflecting on the following passages:*



**Christian stewardship is so living on earth that the Creator and creation are respected, the creation is preserved, brokenness is repaired, and harmony restored.**

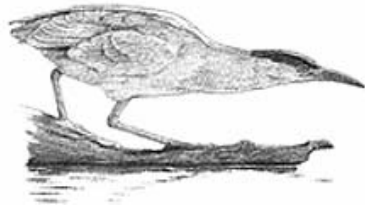
Calvin de Witt

In the past it was possible to destroy a village, a town, a region, even a country. Now it is the whole planet that has come under threat. The fact should compel everyone to face a basic moral consideration; from now on it is only through a conscious choice and then deliberate policy that humanity will survive.

Pope John Paul II *The Ecological Crisis: A Common Responsibility*

Everything in the universe is genetically cousin to everything else. There is literally one family, one bonding, in the universe, because everything is descended from the same source.

Thomas Berry



Love requires us not only to bind up wounds but to be in the first ranks of the movement to change society.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

Those who contemplate the beauty of the Earth find reserves of strength that will last as long as life lasts. There is a symbolic as well as natural beauty in the migration of birds, the ebb and flow of tides, the folded bud ready for spring. There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature – the assurance that dawn comes after night and spring comes after the winter.

Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*

My vocation is medicine, and as a physician I examine the dying planet as I do a dying patient. The earth has a natural system of interacting homeostatic mechanisms similar to the human body's. If one system is diseased, like the ozone layer, then the other systems develop abnormalities in function – the crops will die, the plankton will be damaged, and the eyes of all creatures on the planet will become diseased and vision impaired.

Helen Caldicott, MD in *If You Love This Planet*, WW Norton & Company, New York 1992

**Love all of God's creation, the whole world and every grain of sand in it. Love every leaf, every ray of light. Love the animals, love everything. If you love everything, you will perceive the Divine mystery in things.**

Feodor Dostoyevsky

We are now experiencing a moment of significance far beyond what any of us can imagine. What can be said is that the foundations of a new historical period, the Ecozoic Era, have been established in every realm of human affairs.

The mythic vision has been set into place. The distorted vision of an industrial technological paradise is being replaced by the more viable dream of a mutually enhancing human presence within an ever-renewing organic-based Earth community.

The dream drives the action. In the larger cultural context the dream becomes the myth that both guides and drives the action.

Thomas Berry in *The Great Work*, 1999, Bell Tower NY

*Rachel Carson says:*

*"There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature..."*

*Leader:*

*Share an experience you have had of this kind of "healing", or Share something of the readings which speak to you.*