

Perceiving the Worlds as Sacred

As I read this chapter, many thoughts came into my head. I thought of the beliefs of Indigenous peoples around the globe whose spirituality and sense of the sacred is so closely tied to the physical world; of the early pagans who worshipped their gods at streams, springs, and at intersections of ley lines which were thought to be holy places of great spiritual power.

I thought of the sense of majesty I feel when I am out in the forest and mountains

Amidst the author's negative reflections of the wedge pushed between the world of spirit and the world of matter by the early church reformers, of a creation emptied of its intrinsic sacred value by our greed and need, I hoped we were better than just that. That as modern Christians we could agree with the words of Gregoris: "the creative energy of God is the true being of all that is ... therefore we should regard our human environment as the energy of God that is accessible to our senses." (p. 73)

I thought of many things, but mostly I thought of my father. Of the many, many gifts my Dad gave us, the most precious, perhaps, was a sense of wonder, awe, and joy of being out in nature. We knew without a doubt, because he told us so many times, that the Crowsnest Pass, where he was born and raised, and Revelstoke where he spent his retirement years and where he died, were God's Country. While following the mountain trails with him, mushrooming and berry picking, or picnicking and fishing along the prairie rivers, we knew we were in God's Cathedral, as Michaelson called the world on page 84.

I thought of also of a book that we found and gave him a couple of years before he died. It is called Granddad's Prayers of the Earth, by Douglas Wood.

As Karen mentioned last week, sometimes the arts and popular culture are great transmitters of important messages. This one touched our hearts and I would like to share it with you hoping it might touch yours too.

Read book.

I think that recognizing the spiritual in all nature not only joins us to God but to our pasts, our ancestors and to each other. Each time we sing hymns such as *How*

great thou art, and All Things Bright and Beautiful, we are reminded of the Holiness of God's Creation. As we learn in Job 12: 7 to 10 "But ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds in the sky, and they will tell you **8** or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish in the Sea inform you **9** Which of all these does not know that the hand of the LORD has done this?

10 In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind.

I would like to invite you to join me in prayer. This includes an adaptation of a poem called "Wonder and Beauty" by Ruth Burgess from the book Saying Goodbye:

"Dear Lord we give you thanks for eyes to see the beauty and your majesty in the mountains, forests, prairies, seas, rivers and streams; for ears to rejoice in the sounds of your Creation; for feet to travel and touch the ground beneath us; and for "our lips that we might tell how great is the Creator, who has made all things well." ("All Things Bright and Beautiful").

"We are called forth to delight.

Gentle God of gentle earth, you invite us to behold your wonders,
You beckon us to step into your embrace."("Wonder and Beauty")

In the words of Pope Francis, we ask you to

"Awaken our praise and thankfulness for every being you have made. Give us the grace to feel profoundly joined to everything that is."

Finally, help each of us to be part of that which preserves and honours Mother Earth. Amen