

Worship in Times of Isolation

from The Centre for Music, Liturgy and the Arts

Worship with Your Backyard



CALL TO WORSHIP

Take time to sense what's in your yard – the texture of leaves, the feel of the sun or wind, the fragrance of flowers, herbs and grass, the sounds of your backyard.

God is calling to you in everything – birdsong, traffic, voices, the colours of plants, the blue of the sky, the shape of the clouds, the warmth of the sun.

This is the creator calling to us in creation,

This is creation calling us to the Creator.

Song: [Laudate Omnes Gentes – Taizé community](#)

ADORATION

Look for and name things of beauty, big things, little things, unexpected things. Take photos on your phone and send them your friends and community. Add a message about what you find beautiful.

CONFESSION

Look and name things that aren't quite right – dry patches, things in need of repair. Think about what needs to be put right, what needs to be done for the garden to recover – regular watering or fertilising, changing the plants in a particular spot.

ASSURANCE

Even when things aren't exactly right, God is with us, everything has a place in God's grace and mercy.

THANKSGIVING

Look at and name the things you are thankful for – not just the plants but the garden hose, spades and rakes, garden furniture, the shed, potting mix, the animals, insects and spiders who make this a biodynamic place.

Song: [Glory and gratitude and praise – Iona Community](#)

THE WORD

Reading: Matthew 6:25-34 (NRSV)

²⁵“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink,^[a] or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?^[b] ²⁸And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. ³⁰But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ ³²For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³But strive first for the kingdom of God^[c] and his^[d] righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

³⁴“So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today.

Reflections:

Jesus' example of the lilies reminds us that there is an order in the apparent chaos of creation. There is something organized about birds being fed by bugs and seeds and worms, a pattern in the blooming of lilies and the sprouting and dying of grasses. The falling rain and the rising sun are part of cycles of existence. And we are too.

All of these processes of life exist in relationship with other processes. When Jesus says, “Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or what you will wear,” he doesn't say don't eat, don't drink, don't dress yourself (or your children). He doesn't say don't “do”; he says, “Don't worry. Jesus invites us to see in a different way and to act differently because of it.

Nanette Sawyer

Founding pastor of Grace Commons, Chicago

The universe unfolds in God, who fills it completely. Hence, there is a mystical meaning to be found in a leaf, in a mountain trail, in a dewdrop, in a poor person's face. The ideal is not only to pass from the exterior to the interior to discover the action of God in the soul, but also to discover God in all things. Saint Bonaventure teaches us that "contemplation deepens the more we feel the working of God's grace within our hearts, and the better we learn to encounter God in creatures outside ourselves".

*From 'Laudato Si' On Care for Our Common Home (223)
Encyclical Letter of Pope Francis*

- What, if anything, of the above speaks to you as you sit in your backyard?
- Does anything open up a new experience of God?

Family time around the word:

Go around your backyard and collect things that are interesting. Bring them back together and talk about each one.

- Why is it interesting, what do you like about it?
- Is it natural or manufactured?
- Do you think it has a purpose?
- Do you think it is something that will last for a long time? If yes, why? If not, why not?

Today's reading reminds us that the things around us will not last forever, but God's love for us will. You might like to take a photo of what you've collected and send it to your friends, family and Sunday School teachers reminding them of God's eternal love for them.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

What of the world is entering into your backyard from outside – as you listen and watch, pray for each situation – cars, planes, voices, if you don't hear anything think about what is causing the silence and pray for that.

Song: [I am sure I will see the goodness of the Lord – Taizé community](#)

BLESSING

As you cease this time of worship take this blessing with you:

May the you feel the breath of God with you

Encouraging you and strengthening you.

Let your lives be marked by compassion and kindness,

Today and every other day.