



### **A Company of Charity Prayer Service for the Season of Creation 2020**

*Environment for Prayer – A photo of Earth from space; an index card or a slip of paper of the same size for each participant; a statue or picture to St. Vincent de Paul.*

**Opening Song:** Prayer for Creation by Cathy Yost (Sung to the tune of “Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee.” If there are concerns about singing because of COVID-19, the song may be recited)

O, Creator of the cosmos,  
We present our hearts in prayer.  
We are awestruck by your glory,  
Which surrounds us everywhere.  
From the birdsong of the morning  
To a stormy sky at night,  
You reveal yourself in Nature,  
In its gentleness and might.  
Through each rainbow that you send  
us  
You renew your covenant  
With the earth and all life on it,  
Telling us of your intent  
That each living thing should flourish,  
In its own way, in its place.  
You call us to new awareness  
Of our neighbors and their space.

In our eagerness to prosper,  
We have ravaged what was good.  
Using more than what was needed,  
Taking everything we could.  
We have changed the gentle order  
You intended for the earth.  
Now we humbly ask the wisdom  
To be part of its re-birth.

We seek mercy, we seek vision,  
And the courage we will need  
As we work to help the victims  
Of the sins of human greed.  
By our choices, in our actions,  
May we be part of your plans.  
Help us gently till the Garden  
You’ve entrusted to our hands.

Leader: The theme of the Season of Creation 2020 is Jubilee for Earth. Jubilee is a theme that is dear to the Company of Charity since Vincent de Paul found his inspiration for the spirituality of the Company in the passage in Luke where Jesus sees his own vocation in terms of the Jubilee.

Reader: Jesus stood up in the synagogue and read the passage from the prophet Isaiah: “The Spirit of God has swept over us. Waves of the oil of God’s tender choosing have been lavished over us: to announce amazing plenty to the poor; to set prison doors swinging open on their hinges; to dazzle darkened eyes with light; to lead shackled legs to dance in wild freedom; to proclaim that our time and place, all time and every place, can rest in the gaze of God’s delight.” He gave the scroll back to the attendant and proclaimed, “Today this passage has come true for you.”

Leader: Today, as a global pandemic rages, as the effects of climate crisis are felt all over the world, we are aware, in a way that St. Vincent wasn’t, that Earth itself is oppressed, longing for Jubilee freedom. As Pope Francis says so pointedly, “If you ask me who is the poorest of the poorest of the poor, I would say Mother Earth. We have plundered her. We have abused her.” I invite you to enter a time of silent reflection, to call to mind an abuse of Earth that particularly pains you and to write it on your card. After the time of silence, I will invite you to share what you have written with the group and to place the card on the photo of Earth.

#### Time of Reflection and Sharing

Leader: Vincent wrote, “Jubilee means joy and jubilation; and the Jubilee Year means a year of joyfulness.” I invite you to take back your card, to hold it in your hands for a period of silent reflection. What is an action you would like to take to proclaim Jubilee to Earth? What is an act of Earth-healing you would like to undertake in order to bring joy to Earth and her creatures? Write your resolution on your card. After the silence, I will invite you to share your resolution with the group.

#### Time of Reflection and Sharing

Closing Prayer: All: St. Vincent de Paul, you saw the face of Jesus in those broken and made poor. With your courage and zeal, may we proclaim jubilee to our broken Earth. Mother Seton, you delighted in nature, radiant with God’s presence. Give us discernment to see and reverence God’s presence in Earth. All our ancestors in the Company of Charity, with imagination and creativity, you met the needs of your age. May we respond to the needs of our time and the cries of Earth and Earth’s children. God of Boundless Charity, you invite us to live simply, to live sustainably, to live in solidarity with those made poor. Help us to respond to your call with conviction and generosity.