

Religious Witness for the Earth

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Prayer & Witness for the Earth
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We are here to pray and to bear witness for the earth, and especially for the beleaguered Arctic Refuge.

We are here to ask forgiveness for the wounds we have inflicted upon creation, and to ask God's healing and blessing.

We are here as people of many faiths to proclaim the environment a fundamental religious, moral, and spiritual issue.

It is a religious issue because the Earth is the Lord's, loaned to us in trust, and we have betrayed that trust.

It is a moral issue because the first victims of pollution time and again are the poor and the powerless and too often people of color, and because we are stealing the earth's inheritance from our own children and grandchildren.

And it is a spiritual issue because our addictions to material excess and cheap gasoline are symptoms of our inner poverty, an aching hunger in the heart for communion with the divine and community with each other.

My friends, in years to come as our children and grandchildren grow up in a dangerously deteriorating world, they will ask us the same terrible question asked after the abolition of slavery, after the fall of Third Reich, after the civil rights movement finally put an end to the shame of legal segregation—the same awful and incredulous question asked of every human being complacent in the face of evil:

How could you not have known? Knowing what you knew, how could you have failed to act?

"There is nothing more tragic in all this world," said Martin Luther King, Jr., "than to know right and not to do it."

And so we say to President Bush, with love and respect: Mr. President, global climate change is neither fantasy nor fad. It is God's warning.

We say to Vice President Cheney and Secretary Abraham, with love and respect: Mr. Vice President, Mr. Secretary, an energy policy of drilling and burning and cutting conservation and leaving a legacy of nuclear waste is neither virtue nor wisdom. It is a sin.

And we say to people of faith everywhere: let us pray and sing and speak out and bear witness in faith, hope, and love for the healing of the earth and each other.

Amen.