“We will recover our sense of wonder and our sense of the sacred only if we appreciate the universe beyond ourselves as a revelatory experience of that numinous presence whence all things come into being.”

“The human venture depends absolutely on this quality of awe and reverence and joy in the Earth and all that lives and grows upon the Earth.”

Thomas Berry, *The Great Work*, 49 and 166
Opening Prayer

God of the universe, open our eyes to truly see your creation. Birth in us a new awareness of our place in your delicate balance; transform our hearts that we may reclaim our sense of awe and wonder. Quicken our understanding that we may acknowledge our responsibility and strengthen our resolve to care for Earth, our common home. Amen.

Adapted from “The Web of Life,” Feast of the Universe, 37

Readings from Laudato si’: On care for our common home

• “From panoramic vistas to the tiniest living form, nature is a constant source of wonder and awe. It is also a continuing revelation of the divine” (Paragraph 85, Endnote 55).

• “The universe unfolds in God, who fills it completely. There is a mystical meaning to be found in a leaf, in a mountain trail, in a dewdrop, in a poor person’s face” (Paragraph 233).

• “Mountains have heights and they are plentiful, vast, beautiful, graceful, bright and fragrant. These mountains are what my Beloved is to me. Lonely valleys are quiet, pleasant, cool, shady and flowing with fresh water; in the variety of their groves and in the sweet song of the birds, they afford abundant recreation and delight to the senses, and in their solitude and silence, they refresh us and give rest. These valleys are what my Beloved is to me” (Paragraph 234, Endnote 163: Cántico Espiritual).

• “To sense each creature singing the hymn of its existence is to live joyfully in God’s love and hope” (Paragraph 85, Endnote 56).

• “If we approach nature and the environment without this openness to awe and wonder … our attitude will be that of masters, consumers, ruthless exploiters, unable to set limits on their immediate needs. By contrast, if we feel intimately united with all that exists, then … care will well up spontaneously” (Paragraph 11).

Response: “Every Being in the Universe”

Side 1:
Every being in the universe is an expression of God.
All life springs into existence, perfect, free, taking on shapes, letting circumstances bring it to completion.

Side 2:
God gives birth to all things, nourishes them, maintains them, cares for them, comforts them, protects them, takes them back to herself, creating without possessing, acting without expecting, guiding without interfering.

Together:
This is why the love of God is in the very nature of things, in every being in the universe.

Adapted from “Every Being in the Universe,” Song of the Universe, 35
Personal reflection

Suggestions:
• Recall a time when you sensed nature as a revelation of the divine. What was that experience like for you? What did it teach you; how did it challenge you?
• How can we nurture a sense of awe, wonder and reverence in our relationships with the material world — in ourselves, in others?
• What does the phrase “the love of God is in the very nature of things” mean to you?
• How would recovering a sense of the sacredness of all beings transform our societies?

Shared reflection

Expressions of gratitude for God’s presence through creation

Closing prayer (together)
All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists. Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty.

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light. We thank you for being with us through them today and each day of our lives.

Amen.

Adapted from “A Prayer for Our Earth,” Laudato si’: On care for our common home

Closing song: Choose appropriate music, if desired.