



Reflections and Resources
Earth Day 2016

“You are a tree planted in the garden of the Church. Now a tree is known by its fruits. If the sap of grace flows in the veins of this living tree, its branches should produce leaves first, then buds followed by blossoms and finally fruits of a supernatural flavor.”

Meditation 233 ~ Blessed Basil Moreau



The image of a tree is a symbol for the Congregation of Holy Cross as envisioned by our Founder, Blessed Basil Moreau. Rooted in Christ through Holy Cross we, too have sown seeds through our lives, ministries, and legacies.

The emphasis of the 2016 Earth Day on “trees” is an appropriate image for our Congregation and those whose lives we touch. The image of Christ on the Cross is the symbol of the world Savior on the Tree of Life. 2016 marks forty-six years since the conception of Earth Day. As Earth Day moves closer to its 50th anniversary, the Earth Day Network is calling on each of us to help achieve a most ambitious goal - planting 7.8 billion trees by the year 2020. <http://www.earthday.org/2016/01/19/earth-day-2016-trees-earth/>

Trees will be the first of five major goals in honor of the five-year countdown to the 50th anniversary. On their own and together with other initiatives, they (trees) make a significant and measurable impact on the Earth and serve as the foundation of a cleaner, healthier and more sustainable planet for all. The beauty and the necessity for trees in our existence is likened to the power of community as illustrated by this Talmudic story: “An old man was planting a tree. A young person passed by and asked, ‘What are you planting?’ A carob tree, the old man replied. Silly fool, said the youth. Don’t you know that it takes 70 years for a carob tree to bear fruit? That is ok, said the old man. Just as others planted for me, I plant for future generations.





Are you taking a Tree for granted?

- ❑ **Trees help combat climate change.**

They absorb excess and harmful CO₂ from our atmosphere. In fact, in a single year, an acre of mature trees absorbs the same amount of CO₂ produced by driving the average car 26,000 miles.

- ❑ **Trees help us breathe clean air.**

Trees absorb odors and pollutant gases (nitrogen oxides, ammonia, sulfur dioxide and ozone) and filter particulates out of the air by trapping them on their leaves and bark.

- ❑ **Trees help communities.**

Trees help communities achieve long-term economic and environmental sustainability and provide food, energy and income.

- ❑ **Trees provide nesting places for many of God's smaller creatures.**

Plant a tree. Make a donation. Activate your friends and social networks. Do it!

#trees4earth

See more at: <http://www.earthday.org/earth-day/earth-day-theme/#sthash.2jx6xmcs.dpuf>

GROW LIKE THE TREES

By Sara Debbie Gutfreund

6 LESSONS IN HONOR OF TU B'SHVAT, THE BIRTHDAY OF THE TREES.

1. Let go of the past

1.

Trees let go of their dead leaves. Evaluate whether our choices today are being made with our present set of values and beliefs or whether we are holding onto ideas that no longer help us grow.

2. Growth takes time

2.

The greatest oak was once just a little nut that held its ground. Sometimes it seems like we aren't moving forward despite our efforts to grow. But growth is often subtle and slow. Consistency and courage nurtures our growth even when we can't see any progress. Hold your ground. One day we will reach further than we can imagine.

3. Plant today

3.

The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago; the second best time is now. It's never too late to begin something new. Every seed we plant counts and is a gift to the next generation.

4. Give life

4.

Imagine if trees gave off Wi-Fi signals; we'd be planting them without stop! But trees produce the oxygen we breathe. They give us life. We can also give life by teaching others what we learn, by inspiring each other and by choosing to use our resources to give.

5. Reframe darkness

5.

Seeds are buried deep beneath the earth's dark surface. They shiver in the frozen soil, their shells break apart, leaving them open and exposed. But the seed wouldn't grow if it was cradled in the light or if its shell was encased in armor. Darkness and brokenness often surround us before we can break through the surface. Sometimes the worst moments come before the greatest light.

6. Reach for the sky

6.

New trees are fragile. They can't reach very high. But even the smallest tree looks like it's trying to touch the sun. Reach for the sky. The higher we aim, the more motivated we will be to reach for greatness.

Tree Analogy

from a Tyler Perry play

Think of yourselves like a tree and in life you'll come across 3 types of people:

The leaves – these are the people who come into your life and they make you look good, they keep you company, they give you self worth, but they only last for a season. Once the cold, harsh winter hits, they die away.

The branches – they are strong and ready by your side, however as soon as they break, they leave you high and dry.

The roots – these are the people that build you up, they are always there, they won't move no matter what happens.

I guess it's important that we understand that in life it is inevitable to come across these types of people, you might call Popular, but most are likely to be “the leaves” in your life.

However I believe it is important that we make sure to embrace those who are “the root(s)” in our life, for they will be who you can depend on, they are the ones who made you who you are today.

A tree can have many leaves and branches, but it won't last a day without its roots. The most important root in my life is Jesus, because He would never leave me nor forsake me. Jesus has made me the person I am today and He continues to mold me and shape me to become a better person day by day.

In what ways are you the branch, the leaf, or root to others?



Are you Ready for ACTION?

In a special event, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has invited world leaders to the United Nations to officially sign the [Paris Climate Agreement](#), an international action plan to tackle global warming. President Barack Obama and Chinese President Xi Jinping jointly announced earlier this month they would both sign the agreement on Earth Day, the earliest day possible.

This Earth Day, join others to celebrate our environment and the people who make it a better place. Here are ways you can help.

1. Learn more about climate change.

In [Laudato Si'](#), Pope Francis reminds us that we have a responsibility to care for the Earth—our common home. Take time to read and reflect on it, share it, and implement its suggestions in your community.

2. Advocate for our Earth and its people.

Ask Congress to protect people most harmed by climate change. You can be an advocate for those who often are not heard, by asking your senators and representative to support funding for poverty-focused international assistance, particularly the Green Climate Fund, and full implementation of the Paris Climate Change Accord.

3. Plant a tree in your community.

God calls us to be stewards of the Earth. What you do in your community can have a big impact on the world. Trees clean the air and provide oxygen. They help us prevent soil erosion and can conserve energy. They are also beautiful. Organize your own tree planting or network with: www.arborday.org; www.nolatree.org; www.rainforesttrust.org

4. Support farmers and their families.

Farming projects help hundreds of thousands of people feed their families, work toward self-sufficiency and steward the Earth's resources for future generations. By giving a bag of fertilizer, for instance, you are helping farmers nourish soil, reap better harvests and earn more income.

5. **Pray.**

Pope Francis advocates greater stewardship of global resources as one way to help our most vulnerable sisters and brothers. Please join in prayer for those who suffer the most from environmental disasters. Watch this video from Catholic social teaching on caring for God's creation.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wSnXuCxiHXE&list=PLt5PsPjJAK-0b9BYRHUAxnlKMlv7qyZca&index=1>

6. **Attend a farmers' market.**

See the colors of a bountiful harvest at your local farmers' market. These stands offer locally grown produce that's nearly as fresh as picking it yourself. By supporting local farmers' markets, you are also supporting your neighbors. Find a farmers' market near you. Try your own green thumb in growing vegetables and herbs, share with others.

7. **Support fair trade.**

This Earth Day you may want to get some dirt between your fingers and plant. When you support fair trade, you are supporting artisans around the world with fair wages and better access to markets.

8. Educate yourself and others

Develop “fun-facts” about trees in your community and their significance and share your findings through newsletters, bulletins, social media, or lessons.

Discover the trees in your own backyard, nearby parks, neighborhood, college campus, or school yard ~ can you identify them?

Enjoy the art of trees: photos, pictures, songs, poetry....

9. Fundraise

You can provide direct assistance by setting up a page to raise money to support our emergency efforts. Your support will ensure that we can provide immediate assistance, including food, water, access to sanitation, legal services and medical care. Set up your own fundraising page.

10. Be the change.

You can join CRS University and the [I Am Climate Change campaign](#) in making a difference this Earth Day. [Sign and share this Change.org campaign.](#)

Portions Adapted from Catholic Relief Services



Check out More ways to Celebrate Earth Day

- <http://catechistsjourney.loyolapress.com/2009/04/10-catholic-ways-to-celebrate-earth-day>
- <http://inhabitat.com/6-fun-meaningful-ways-to-celebrate-earth-day/>
- <https://earthday.ca/> (Earth Day Canada)
- <http://earthday.envirolink.org/guide6.html>
- <http://www.inc.com/guides/2010/04/earth-day-initiatives.html> (at work)
- <http://www.ibtimes.com/earth-day-2015-activities-15-ideas-ways-celebrate-mother-nature-become-environmental-1891090>
- <http://www.greenschools.net/article.php?id=160> (school)
- <http://www.connectionsacademy.com/blog/posts/2013-04-22/Earth-Day-Activities-for-Students.aspx>
- <http://www.edutopia.org/blog/earth-day-lesson-plans-matt-davis>



Resources:

Prayers, Scripture, Videos, Songs, Books, Poems, and More

Prayer Services, Prayers and Reflections

Holy Cross International Justice Office

www.holycrossjustice.org/ (access website for additional resources)

http://www.holycrossjustice.org/resources/PublishingImages/2016EarthDay/4%2016_EarthDay_eng_Page_1.jpg

Catholic Health Association

<https://www.chausa.org/prayers/prayer-library/national-and-international-observances/global-and-international-prayers-and-reflections/earth-day-april-22/2016-earth-day-reflection>

Center for Concern – Education for Justice (register for trial login)

<https://educationforjustice.org/resources/prayer-earth-day-2016>

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/prayers-and-devotions/prayers/prayers-to-care-for-creation.cfm>

Giving Thanks

<http://www.centerformindfullearning.org/thanksgiving/>

Earth Prayer ~ Tree

**Hey! Learn to hear my feeble voice.
At the center of the sacred hoop
You have said that I should make the tree to bloom.**

**With tears running, O Great Spirit, my Grandfather,
With running eyes I must say
The tree has never bloomed**

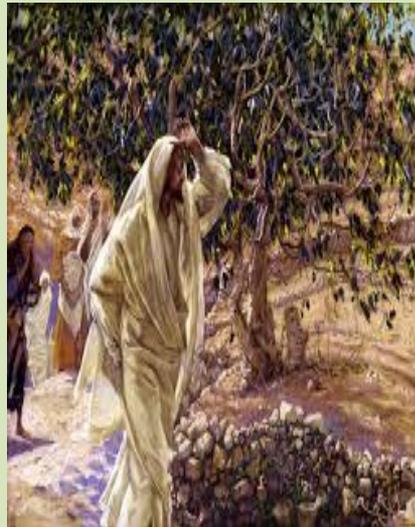
**Here I stand, and the tree is withered.
Again, I recall the great vision you gave me.**

**It may be that some little root of the sacred tree still
lives.**

**Nourish it then
That it may leaf
And bloom
And fill with singing birds!**

**Hear me, that you once again
Find the good road
And the shielding tree.**

- Black Elk



Earth Day Prayer of Confession

**O God, maker of heaven and earth, of all that
is, seen and unseen:**

**You place us in your creation, and you
command us to care for it.**

**Your works declare glory and splendor, and
you call us to praise and reverence.**

**Where we have degraded or destroyed earth's
bounty, forgive us.**

**Where we have taken beauty and majesty for
granted, have mercy upon us.**

**Where we have become estranged from the
creatures with whom we share this planet,
grant us your peace.**

**Renew us in the waters of baptism,
refresh us with the winds of your spirit,
and sustain us with the bread of life.
In the name of Jesus Christ, and for the sake of
the new creation, we pray. Amen.**

*Rev. Ken Carter, pastor of Providence United
Methodist Church, Charlotte, NC*

A long, straight path lined with large, leafy trees leading into the distance. The path is a reddish-brown color and is flanked by a green lawn. The trees are large and have dense green foliage, creating a canopy over the path. The path leads towards a bright, open area in the distance.

Scriptural References

Daniel 4: 10-12

Deuteronomy 20: 19

Isaiah 65:22

Isaiah 11: 1, 10-11

Jeremiah 17:8

Jeremiah 23:25

Hosea 14:6-8

Job 14:7-9

Mark 4: 5-6

Luke 13: 6-9

John 15: 4-7

Colossians 2: 6-7

Videos and Songs

- <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHsFsQbtMGZ15R3csXMrXdg>
tree safer in the city or rainforest?
- https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvGwWJ_bcMkHRBuTNCL08cA - rainforest relaxation
- <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7MVRMMGa2VZD0T2rLnp8ZA> - song by Enya on trees
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qIT3TFU4kTw&nohtml5=False> - song by Enya on trees
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZIHdutilVoM&nohtml5=False> - In memory of trees – Enya
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Yrd5PDyUtE&nohtml5=False> - love song for trees
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BickMFHAZR0&nohtml5=False>
the most amazing thing about trees – high school level
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iTtjXfc9HJY&nohtml5=False> - tree magic –really good
- *******<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2-OoHjjh5fM&nohtml5=False>
excellent on importance of trees
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yV2EK2bMgwk&nohtml5=False> - save the environment
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=97dNssC3E3A&nohtml5=False>
Investing From The Ground Up: Community Tree Success – college/high school
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bTukve4z8rw&nohtml5=False>
The Effects of Urban Trees on Air Quality .. College level

- [***https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=74063UKSmXw&nohtml5=False](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=74063UKSmXw&nohtml5=False)
why trees -- really good
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= WkoFOoPJME&nohtml5=False](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WkoFOoPJME&nohtml5=False)
how to save trees
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H8xGObl8p9I&ebc=ANyPxKrsao4zviHNdZcwB_UddSAQ_R6jOS4sztcvyyvRRVAMjdhQWVVU8DiRW8TmHuFbeDjOZFghCQ3snCpka-omwXwvzHopBSRQ&nohtml5=False save the trees
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=31XrAaH8Yql&nohtml5=False>
saving the environment
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GxLLEkrcQeA&nohtml5=False>
Urban Forestry 4: Urban Ecosystems and Their Potential to Provide Ecosystem Services - middle school good
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6g0FZogkPyE&nohtml5=False>
An Urban Forest Legacy

Imagine If Trees Gave Off
Wifi Signals, We Would
Be Planting So Many Trees
And We'd Probably Save
The Planet Too.



Too Bad They
Only Produce The
Oxygen We
Breathe.

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jlz_rZH1IYk&nohtml5=False
Benefits of Urban Forests - good --- urban forest depend on US
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xy86ak2fQJM&nohtml5=False>
The Queen of Africa's Trees –sycamore - good back info on what it provides for all other forms of life
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5mZa15grdBg&nohtml5=False>
trees can learn English --- good
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ktYroQP5A1c>
Legend of the three trees – Christian movie – good for 1,2,3,4,5 – maybe 6th grade
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o1B5wMF3n0I>
Albert & Junior - Why Do We Need Trees - very good for little ones
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ky1IIM_Gok
Learn About the Needs of the Tree; Woodland Wildlife – Interesting - good for 1,2,3,4
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D7dKRBZVLvI>
song for kids --- wonderful – great vocabulary...and science – why we need K-4
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z6vFWmLXI3g>
song for middle or anyone -- "Tree Song" sung by Evie Karlsson – great to learn importance of trees



Poems and Books

Poems by Robert Frost ...

<http://www.web-books.com/Classics/Poetry/Anthology/Frost/Birches.htm>

Canticle of the Sun ~ Marty Haugen ...

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IE_Ei6JRI1o

Selection Poems on Trees of all kind ...

<http://www.poemhunter.com/poems/tree/page-1/28654/#content>

<http://www.centerformindfullearning.org/thanksgiving/>

The Giving Tree.... Shel Silverstein

The Fall of Freddie the Leaf Leo Buscaglia

Twisted Tree.... Kent Meyers

The Surrender Tree: Poems of Cuba's Struggle for Freedom.... Margarita Engle

People Trees David L. Haberman (worship of trees in Northern India)

Mayer Aaron Levi and His Lemon Tree.... Tami Lehman-Wilzig

American Canopy Eric Rutkow





**“And the wind said,
May you be as strong as the oak,
yet flexible as the birch
may you stand as tall as the redwood,
live gracefully as the willow and
may you always bear fruit
all your days on this earth.”**

