

Kateri Tekakwitha Chaplet:

(Kateri, Patroness of the Environment)



“Even the seasons form a great circle in their changing, and always come back again to where they were. The life of a person is a circle from childhood to childhood, and so it is in everything where power moves. Birds make their nests in circles, for theirs is the same religion as ours.”

Nicholas Black Elk

The mysteries reflected in the Sacred Circle of Creation are the Seven Sacred Days of Creation. Much like the Franciscan Crown, each bead is a day. A group of seven days is a week, each week we reflect on one of the Seven Sacred Days of Creation.

The prayer form we are using is similar to a Servite Chaplet. The Servite Chaplet and Franciscan Crown are rosaries that have groups of seven beads, and they are called weeks, there are seven groups of seven beads. The mysteries reflected on are the seven sorrows of the Blessed Virgin Mary as with the Servite Chaplet or in the instance of the Franciscan Crown the seven joys of the Blessed Mother.

How To Pray The Chaplet

In the name of the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Pray the Cantic of St. Francis

Reflect on the First Day of Creation Mystery

Continue your reflection as you pray
an Our Father, Seven Hail Marys and the Glory Be.

Go to the next mystery and repeat.

References:

- All Biblical references are from The Message Bible.
- All graphics are found in Creative Commons by unknown photographers.



Reflections prepared by the Care for Creation Team, serving the Archdiocese of St Paul & Minneapolis, 2023 Contact: creation@archspm.org

Prologue:



In the beginning...

This is a microsecond before the beginning of existence. All cultures have Creation Stories, and many describe this sliver of time before the physical presence of what we call the universe. All of these images that we offer are taken from one of the many translations of scripture into English. Nothing, soup of nothingness, void, eternal darkness, inky blackness, chaos, the deep, watery abyss, roaring ocean, the face of the waters, sea of nothingness are the images presented to us from scripture. Chaos as an image is such an attraction, there was no order.

Even science imagines what was here before our reality.

The reality is, the only one who knows, what was here before our current universe, is the Creator, it is a mystery for us to reflect on.

In our next moment the stories continue: A thought, a breath, a sound, a word, an action, moved across, hovered, wind-swept, brooded like a bird, an in-action, a mist allowed to rise up, streams flowed, underground springs, a flood. A sacred moment in which what we know as reality came into being by the Creator's intent. Some say we were loved into being in that flash.

Let's imagine that a physical dimension was brought into being through a spiritual dimension. In John 1 we hear that everything came into being through the Word. The Incarnation, the Divine presence activated the physical form and is at the core of all creation. The wind, the breath, the fingerprints of the Creator are present in all of Creation. Again from John 1 "The

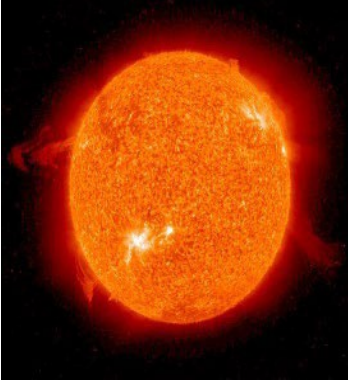
Word (Logos, Christ) was made flesh" In our more relational spiritualities such as Franciscanism we find that all of Creation has been touched by the Creator and is related to one another hence not only flesh was the Divine Word made into, but all of Creation has experienced the incarnation of Christ in the moment of Creation.

"What Creator touches is sacred," Nicholas Black Elk reminds us. We learn that not only is humanity sacred and needs to be respected, but that all of Creation is sacred and needs to be respected.

As we come into prayer let us center ourselves with the connection and respect in our relationship with all of Creation.

Canticle of St. Francis of Assisi

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen



*O Most High, all-powerful, good Lord God, to you
belong praise, glory,
honour and all blessing.*

*Be praised, my Lord, for all your creation and
especially for our Brother Sun,
who brings us the day and the light; he is strong
and shines magnificently.*

*O Lord, we think of you when we look at him.
Be praised, my Lord, for Sister Moon,*

and for the stars which you have set shining and lovely in the heavens.

*Be praised, my Lord, for our Brothers Wind and Air and every kind of weather by which you, Lord,
uphold life in all your creatures.*

Be praised, my Lord, for Sister Water, who is very useful to us, and humble and precious and pure.

*Be praised, my Lord, for Brother Fire,
through whom you give us light in the darkness:
he is bright and lively and strong.*

*Be praised, my Lord, for Sister Earth, our Mother, who nourishes us and sustains us, bringing forth
fruits and vegetables of many kinds and flowers of many colours.*

*Be praised, my Lord,
for those who forgive for love of you;
and for those who bear sickness and weakness
in peace and patience-- you will grant them a crown. Be
praised, my Lord, for our Sister Death,
whom we must all face.*

*I praise and bless you, Lord, and I give
thanks to you,
and I will serve you in all humility.*

The First Mystery of Creation: Day One

1:1-5 God spoke: "Light!" And light appeared.

God saw that light was good and separated light from dark. God named the light Day, he named the dark Night.

It was evening, it was morning—Day One.

A word, a sound, brought lightness to the inky void. Darkness does not alter light, but light alters darkness. We have several stories about the light, from science through religion, and we have a variety of time frames. Let's use a general time frame like, "In the beginning...", a nano-second after the start. We start with light. The Gospel of John proclaims it like this:

John 1:4-5 What came into existence was Life, and the Life was Light to live by.

The Life-Light blazed out of the darkness; the darkness couldn't put it out.

Each morning with the rise of the sun we are reminded of this first light. Light has a life and brings life into focus. Light is the product of energy that drives our universe. We don't receive any more physical energy than what was brought into existence at the very beginning. The only newly available energy comes from the spirit. Immediately the Creator knew it is good, this is not a one-time event. As it was good in the beginning, is now and ever shall be as we declare in the prayer, Glory Be. Time enters into existence and is utilized to bring order to the deep.



The light and order of the universe has the Creator's thumbprint, and we are all connected in this opening moment. Our morning prayer connects the now with the initial creation moment, as we create our lives, we always have an umbilicus to creation. Let us remember that the light, the life, all existence is good. It was evening, it was morning—Day One.

In the Judeo-Christian tradition, the word "creation" has a broader meaning than "nature", for it has to do with God's loving plan in which every creature has its own value and significance. Nature is usually seen as a system which can be studied, understood and controlled, whereas creation can only be understood as a gift from the outstretched hand of the Father of all, and as a reality illuminated by the love which calls us together into universal communion. LS 76

Creator God, from the very first day of creation you caress the world with your love. The beauty which enfolds creation is a mirror of your love and grace. We, in turn, are invited to be aware of the universal communion of which we are apart. Amen

Pray Our Father, Seven Hail Marys, Glory be...

The Second Mystery of Creation: Day Two

Gen 1:6-8 God spoke: "Sky! In the middle of the waters; separate water from water!"

God made sky.

He separated the water under sky from the water above sky.

And there it was.



Water was named by Aristotle as one of the four fundamental elements of creation along with earth, air, and fire. The versatility of water as a solvent is essential to living organisms. Life is believed to have originated in the aqueous solutions of the world's oceans, and living organisms depend on aqueous solutions, such as blood and digestive juices, for biological processes.

Although the molecules of water are simple in structure (H₂O), the physical and chemical properties of the compound are extraordinarily complicated, and they are not typical of most substances found on Earth. For example, although the sight of ice cubes floating in a glass of ice water is commonplace, such behavior is unusual for chemical entities. For almost every other compound, the solid state is denser than the liquid state; thus, the solid would sink to the bottom of the liquid. The fact that ice floats on water is exceedingly important in the natural world because the ice that forms on ponds and lakes in cold areas of the world acts as an insulating barrier that protects the aquatic life below. If ice were denser than liquid water, ice forming on a pond would sink, thereby exposing more water to the cold temperature. Thus, the pond would eventually freeze throughout, killing all the life-forms present.

Because of its prominence, water has long played an important religious and philosophical role in human history. Water is mentioned 722 times in the Christian Bible; 47 times in *Laudato Si'*. In many cultures and religions water becomes a symbol of inner transformation. Jesus refers to "living water" as the Holy Spirit. The Spirit becomes synonymous with water as life force, that hovers, calls out and names each of us as children of God through the waters of Baptism. The Spirit of God is like an underground spring bringing fresh water, to all the desert places in our lives, in our world--gurgling, sustaining life. The Lakota say... Mni Wiconi—Water is life. It is a basic transformative element of life.

*Psalm 136:5-6: Thank the miracle-working God,
His love never quits.*

*The God whose skill formed the cosmos,
His love never quits.*

*The God who laid out Earth on ocean foundations,
His love never quits.*

*Psalm 148:7 Sing to God a thanksgiving hymn, play
music on your instruments to God,
who fills the sky with clouds,
preparing rain for the Earth,
then turning the mountains green with grass.*

John 4:14 "but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst.

But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

Soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God. The history of our friendship with God is always linked to particular places which take on an intensely personal meaning; we all remember places, and revisiting those memories does us much good. LS 84

Creator God, you enrich our very beings with life-sustaining water. Hover over us and bless all creatures. Remind us that we are beloved and kin to one another.

It was evening, it was morning - Day Two

Pray Our Father, Seven Hail Marys, Glory be...

The Third Mystery of Creation: Day Three



*Earth produced green seed-bearing plants, all varieties,
And fruit-bearing trees of all sorts.
God saw that it was good.
It was evening, it was morning—Day Three.*

*Gen1:9-12 God spoke: “Separate!
Water-beneath-Heaven, gather into one place; Land, appear!”
And there it was.
God named the land Earth.
He named the pooled water Ocean.
God saw that it was good.
God spoke: “Earth, green up! Grow all varieties of seed-bearing
plants,
Every sort of fruit-bearing tree.”
And there it was.*

Into what was good after the Second Day, the Creator spoke again. Consider these four concepts as we reflect on the Third Day: separate, gather, grow, and good...

✚ Separate has two meanings: to move apart and forming or viewing a unit as individual, yet as a part of the whole.

✚ Gather is described as assembling and bringing together, to unite from scattered places or sources.

✚ Grow means the natural development of progressing to maturity, all varieties and of every sort.

✚ Good is defined as to be desired, morally excellent, and something that brings benefit or advantage.

Recall the Parable of the Sower from Matthew 13 to help visualize this further. The farmer had previously gathered his seeds and is now separating them as he plants them. Some seeds fall on the road, in the gravel, in the weeds and in good soil. Only the seeds planted in the good soil endured. The Message Bible says, “the seed cast on good earth...produces a harvest beyond the sower’s wildest dreams.”

As we reflect on these words, we are called to separate from the typical or usual, to see both the macrocosm and the microcosm of created beings, to step away from practices that are harmful. In gathering we come together from all varieties and every sort, in like-mindedness for encouragement and support. Gathering is essential for growth. All seeds need to be gathered/harvested for growth and development of the new. And growth brings goodness and benefit for all.

The Lord was able to invite others to be attentive to the beauty that there is in the world because he himself was in constant touch with nature, lending it an attention full of fondness and wonder. As he made his way throughout the land, he often stopped to contemplate the beauty sown by his Father and invited his disciples to perceive a divine message in things: “Lift up your eyes and see how the fields are already white for harvest” (Jn 4:35). “The kingdom of God is like a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all seeds, but once it has grown, it is the greatest of plants” (Mt 13:31-32). LS 97

Creator God, separate, gather, and grow in us the desire to be invested in co-creating “good soil” for Earth, but also “good soil” in our hearts, minds, spirits, and souls. May you continue to say, “It is good.”

It was evening, it was morning -- Day Three
Pray Our Father, Seven Hail Marys, Glory be...

The Fourth Mystery of Creation: Day Four



Gen 1:14-19 God spoke: "Lights! Come out! Shine in Heaven's sky!
Separate Day from Night.

*Mark seasons and days and years,
Lights in Heaven's sky to give light to Earth." And there it was. God
made two big lights, the larger to take charge of Day, The smaller to be
in charge of Night; and he made the stars.
God placed them in the heavenly sky to light up Earth and oversee Day
and Night, to separate light and dark. God saw that it was good.*

Sun, moon, stars... if you live far from the city lights, on a cloudless night, you might behold the brilliance of the moon at some point in its phase: waxing, waning even fully resplendent, spreading its glow, a glow that will allow you to walk on a dirt road without the aid of a flashlight or a torch, that will allow you to discern the outlines of trees and homes. If there is a blanket of white snow on the ground, reflecting and further diffusing the moon's light, you can discern even more features of the landscape around you... and perhaps behold the face of a friend who walks with you.

Yet, the moon is not the source of the light. It is reflecting the light of the Sun, the greater light. We cannot see the sun at night. The moon reminds us that the sun has not stopped generating its light. We exclaim to ourselves, or that companion, praising the moon "how

beautiful and bright." And the moon replies with its own praise, but to the sun and the light it is reflecting: "how beautiful, how bright!"

And the sun? It can only say "I am what I was called forth to be, by the Creator." This sun's light sustains us according to the Creator's design.

May we find God-light reflected in all facets of God's creation.

And the stars, come into shimmering relief when the moon has gone dark, form an endless chorus of lights...millions of suns... far off in distance and time, but not disconnected. They tell of our past and point to our future. Our origins in God, our creator, and our return to God.

Psalm 148:3-5 "Praise God, sun and moon, praise God, all you shining stars! Praise God, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens!
Let them praise the name of the creator, for God commanded and they were created."

*Dante Alighieri spoke of "the love which moves the sun and the stars."
This sentiment finds magnificent expression in the hymn of Saint Francis*

In this universe, shaped by open and inter-communicating systems, we can discern countless forms of relationship and participation. This leads us to think of the whole as open to God's transcendence, within which it develops. LS 79

Creator God, you gave us Christ as our light, through whom you created the world with the hand of your spirit. Help us to stay in relationships of joy, self-giving, and co-creation with all of your creatures to bring about your heavenly city, fully realized on our planet, an everlasting realm of justice and peace and joy. Amen.

It was evening it was morning—Day Four

Pray Our Father, Seven Hail Marys, Glory be...

The Fifth Mystery of Creation: Day Five



²⁰⁻²³God spoke: "Swarm, Ocean, with fish and all sea life!
Birds, fly through the sky over Earth!" God created
the huge whales,
all the swarm of life in the waters, And every
kind and species of flying birds.
God saw that it was good.
God blessed them: "Prosper! Reproduce! Fill Ocean!
Birds, reproduce on Earth!"

Feel the creative energy of God filling the waters and the skies with creatures of all kinds from the microscopic single celled to the overpowering whale, from the tiniest hummingbird to the

strutting ostrich. Who could fathom such variety, beauty, and purpose? It's as if Creator took a magic wand filled with light and energy and flung life everywhere with abandon--All life, filled with creative energy and love.

This is the basis of our conviction that, as part of the universe, called into being by one Father, all of us are linked by unseen bonds and together form a kind of universal family, a sublime communion which fills us with a sacred, affectionate, and humble respect. Here I would reiterate that "God has joined us so closely to the world around us that we can feel the desertification of the soil almost as a physical ailment, and the extinction of a species as a painful disfigurement". LS 89

Creator God, fill us with the extravagant love and care you so generously share with all creation. May we never take the creatures of the sea and the birds of the air for granted.

It was evening, it was morning—Day Five

Pray Our Father, Seven Hail Marys, Glory be...

The Sixth Mystery of Creation: Day Six

Gen 1:20-24 God spoke: "Earth, generate life! Every sort and kind: cattle and reptiles and wild animals— all kinds." And there it was:
wild animals of every kind,
Cattle of all kinds, every sort of reptile and bug.
God saw that it was good.



26-28 God spoke: "Let us make human beings in our image, make them, reflecting our nature
So they can be responsible for the fish in the sea, the birds in the air, the cattle,
And, yes, Earth itself, and every animal that moves on the face of Earth."
God created human beings; he created them godlike,
Reflecting God's nature.

He created them male and female.

God blessed them:

*"Prosper! Reproduce! Fill Earth! Take charge!
Be responsible for fish in the sea and birds in the air, for every living thing that moves on the face of Earth."* *29-30* Then God said,
*"I've given you every sort of seed-bearing plant on Earth And every kind of fruit-bearing tree, given them to you for food.
To all animals and all birds,
everything that moves and breathes,
I give whatever grows out of the ground for food."
And there it was.*

31 God looked over everything he had made; it was so good, so very good!

On this day Creator inspected everything that was made. Each speck contained a purpose, a purpose given by the Maker. Each purpose is designed for life-goodness. Death, suffering, pain, war, pestilence, and disease were not in the original design. Each individual from the smallest microcosm to the created universe was created with goodness programmed in.

Creator began to put the system together. Stars here, moon's there, planets are set in motion, all of the material came together to make all of the Earth, water and land, forest and plain, sea and sky, creatures great and small. As each piece came together, the goodness exuded as it came together into a gestalt, an organized whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. All parts realize they are connected, and all are needed to bring forth the Kingdom of the Creator. Very Good!

"Tilling" refers to cultivating, ploughing or working, while "keeping" means caring, protecting, overseeing and preserving. This implies a relationship of mutual responsibility between human beings and nature. Each community can take from the bounty of the earth whatever it needs for subsistence, but it also has the duty to protect the earth and to ensure its fruitfulness for coming generations. "The Earth is the Lord's" (Ps 24:1); to him belongs "the Earth with all that is within it" (Dt 10:14). LS 67

Creator God, you sustain life, gift us with intelligence to keep the Earth pristine. May we do our part. Amen
Pray Our Father, Seven Hail Marys, Glory be... It was evening, it was morning— Day Six

The Seventh Mystery of Creation: Day Seven

Gen 2:1-3 Heaven and Earth were finished, down to the last detail.

By the seventh day God had finished his work.

On the seventh day he rested from all his work. God blessed the seventh day.

He made it a Holy Day because on that day he rested from his work, all the creating God had done.

On the evening of the seventh day Creation is complete... each particle created has the Creator's blessing, intent, goodness, balance, order, mutuality, grace in the tiniest speck and we are all connected by the movement of the breath of God.

Hyper-stimulation, hyper-activity, sleep deprivation, workaholicism, losing focus, disorientation, mental and physical exhaustion are maladies affecting many in the 21st Century. "Letting Go" of my



"creating" and my long "To Do" list, I take a whole day to SLOW-DOWN, LOOK, and LISTEN to my body, mind, emotions, and spirit. I note the world around me. A good rest opens my eyes to beauty and mystery in my life. The sabbath-day allows me to sense God's benevolence accompanying me throughout the week.

Gratefulness arises.

If our Creator God is presented in Genesis as resting on the 7th day from all the work, should I allow the tyranny of my drivenness exempt me from entering Sabbath rest? I am a human being, not a human doing.

We tend to demean contemplative rest as something unproductive and unnecessary, but this is to do away with the very thing which is most important about work: its meaning. We are called to include in our work a dimension of receptivity and gratuity, which is quite different from mere inactivity. Rather, it is another way of working, which forms part of our very essence. It protects human action from becoming empty activism; it also prevents that unfettered greed and sense of isolation which make us seek personal gain to the detriment of all else. LS 237

Sunday is the day of the Resurrection, the "first day" of the new creation, whose first fruits are the Lord's risen humanity, the pledge of the final transfiguration of all created reality. LS 237

Creator God, Father and Mother of us all, we come to the end of this Chaplet more connected to Mother Earth which continues to be blessed by your caress. May we move about our day in gratitude for all your gifts. May we do our part to honor sacred creation. Amen.

Pray Our Father, Seven Hail Marys, Glory Be...

It was evening, it was morning – Day Seven