Toward a 21st-Century Spirituality
Awakening to Ecospirituality
“The spirit of human solidarity and kinship with all life is strengthened when we live with **REVERENCE** for the mystery of being, **GRATITUDE** for the gift of life, - and **HUMILITY** regarding the human place in nature”.

Earth Charter
REVERENCE FOR THE MYSTERY OF BEING

... a feeling of profound awe and respect – and even love...
GRATITUDE for the gift of life

Give thanks to the Lord for He is good...
HUMILITY FOR THE HUMAN PLACE IN NATURE

Jesus was an 'earthling'... Are you?
How can we grow constantly more reverent, grateful, and humble?
It is important that we humans develop a **new relationship** with our planet - with the Universe!

Move **FROM** ‘kingship’

**BEYOND** ‘stewardship’

**TO** ‘kinship’
Might our times call us to pray:

O Birther!  
Father-Mother of the Cosmos...

Thy kin-dom come...
If we probe the 'Creation Story' from the beginning... we see that EVERY BEING is a unique expression of Divine Mystery!
The universe is the primary sacred community. It is the way in which the divine is presently revealing itself to us.

Thomas Berry
With this cosmic creation story as context, how do we discover the role to which we humans are being called?
Vatican II calls the Church - the people of God - to “read the signs of the times.”

More recently, the Earth Charter reminds all peoples that:

“We stand at a critical moment in Earth’s history, a time when humanity must choose its future.”
The praxis which characterizes Liberation Theology can be a great tool for this venture:

- SOCIAL ANALYSIS
- THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION
- ACTION
SOCIAL ANALYSIS: Let us ponder some of the 'signs of the times'

VIOLENT CONFLICTS

ECOLOGICAL DEVASTATION

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INEQUITY
How unsustainable are we today?
Modern industrialism began in a world with very few people and plentiful resources.

Now the situation is reversed.
I. The dominant patterns of production and consumption are causing:

- environmental devastation
- depletion of resources
- a massive extinction of species
II. The benefits of development are not shared equitably and the gap between rich and poor is widening.
III. An unprecedented rise in human population has overburdened ecological and social systems.

- 1804 – 1 billion
- 1927 – 2 billion
- 1960 – 3 billion
- 1974 – 4 billion
- 1987 – 5 billion
- 1999 – 6 billion
- 2013 – 7 billion
- 2028 – 8 billion
IV. These trends are perilous, but not inevitable.
“The challenge is to build a new economy... and to do it at ‘wartime speed’ before we miss so many of nature’s deadlines that the economic system begins to unravel”.
THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Every day we pray: Thy will be done on Earth as it is in heaven...

What might this mean in this time of ecological and societal crisis?
We must learn from ‘NATURE’ how to redesign our human systems.
The basic pattern of the created universe is a profound unity of interdependent activities - especially as seen in the web of interactions within living systems.
Of what mysteries can Earth’s BASIC MODEL OF LIFE remind us?

THE TRINITY

THE PASCHAL MYSTERY

OUR GLOBAL CHALLENGES
The major problems of our time are all **systemic** problems – **INTERCONNECTIONED** and **INTERDEPENDENT**
Only *cyclic interrelationships* exist *within* living ecosystems -- and *between them* and the air, soil, water and sunshine which make up the "creation story" on planet Earth.

Everything is connected to everything else!
Can humanity awaken to the fact that we live at an "Exodus moment"?

The Earth Charter is quite clear on this:

**The choice is ours:**
form a global partnership to **care for**
Earth and one another **or risk** the
destruction of ourselves and the
diversity of life.
It goes on to remind us what we must do:

**Fundamental changes are needed in our**

VALUES, INSTITUTIONS and WAYS OF LIVING.

We humans must learn to live on Earth’s terms -- and within its limits.
This CALL TO ACTION calls for a spirituality which is:

CONTEMPLATIVE

ASCETIC

PROPHETIC
Shocked by the devastation we have caused we are awakening to the WONDER OF A UNIVERSE never before seen in quite the same manner.

Thomas Berry
We respond in a deeply contemplative way when we stand in awe and wonder as part of the natural world - (remembering the miracle of our own amazing bodies).
Every single creature is full of God and is a book about God. If I spend enough time with the tiniest creature - even a caterpillar - I would never have to prepare a sermon.

Meister Eckhart
The ascetic response calls us to cultivate a "new asceticism" by restraining ourselves from today’s rampant consumerism.

It calls us
- to adjust our choices
- to limit consumption and waste
  - to curb pollution
- to be informed voters
The prophetic response calls us to consider the ecological situation as a justice issue.

Poverty, pollution, and ecological destruction go hand in hand.
The transformation in which we are living is HUGE - nothing less than the emergence of a new heaven and a new Earth - and, consequently, a new God and a new humanity.
The retrieval of spirituality as THE PRIMARY DYNAMIC of Human Spiritual Growth may be the supreme challenge in the new millennium.

Diarmuid O'Murchu
My heart is moved...
Carolyn McDade and Friends

(Often artists get ideas across best...)

Poem by Adrienne Rich
My heart is moved by all I cannot save:

So much has been destroyed.
I have to cast my lot with those who age after age, perversely, with no extraordinary power, reconstitute the world.

Adrienne Rich
We must join together to bring forth a sustainable global society…
founded on:

*Respect and care for the community of life*

*Ecological integrity*

*Social and economic justice*

*Democracy, nonviolence, and peace*

*Principles of the Earth Charter*
For those who know how to see, nothing is profane --

EVERYTHING IS SACRED.

Teilhard de Chardin
An abuse of the sacred is the basic flaw in many of our efforts at ecologically adjusting our human presence to the natural world.

Thomas Berry
The extent to which we can enter into an expanded consciousness – particularly a contemplative consciousness – that brings the sacred into daily life will determine the future of the Earth.

Mary Conrow Coelho
We are the cantors of the universe.

Rabbi Abraham Heschel
Let ours be a time remembered for

• The *awakening* of a new reverence for life,
• The *firm resolve* to achieve sustainability,
• The *quickening* of the struggle for justice and peace, and
• The *joyful celebration* of life.

Earth Charter