

MOVEMENTS 2: GOD'S LOVE IN ACTION

Petitionary Prayer: *I ask my Lord for the graces to experience the awe and wonder of the reality of God's creation; and for an increase in gratitude for the gift of God creating me, my loved ones, and the whole world.*

Prayer 1. Read Genesis 1:1-19 (God said, "Let there be light")

In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless wasteland, and darkness covered the abyss, while a mighty wind swept over the waters. Then God said, "*Let there be light,*" and there was light. God saw how good the light was. God then separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." Thus, evening came, and morning followed - the first day.

Then God said, "*Let there be a dome in the middle of the waters, to separate one body of water from the other.*" And so it happened: God made the dome, and it separated the water above the dome from the water below it. God called the dome "the sky." Evening came, and morning followed - the second day.

Then God said, "*Let the water under the sky be gathered into a single basin, so that the dry land may appear.*" And so it happened: the water under the sky was gathered into its basin, and the dry land appeared. God called the dry land "the earth," and the basin of the water he called "the sea." God saw how good it was. Then God said, "*Let the earth bring forth vegetation: every kind of plant that bears seed and every kind of fruit tree on earth that bears fruit with its seed in it.*" And so it happened: the earth brought forth every kind of plant that bears seed and every kind of fruit tree on earth that bears fruit with its seed in it. God saw how good it was. Evening came, and morning followed - the third day.

Then God said: "*Let there be lights in the dome of the sky, to separate day from night. Let them mark the fixed times, the days and the years, and serve as luminaries in the dome of the sky, to shed light upon the earth.*" And so it happened: God made the two great lights, the greater one to govern the day, and the lesser one to govern the night; and he made the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky, to shed light upon the earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. God saw how good it was. Evening came, and morning followed - the fourth day.

For Reflection: Let the work of God's creation play out in your imagination. What do you see and hear? What was God like in His act of creating? Picture yourself right there with God and notice what happens inside you.

Prayer 2. Read Genesis 1:20-25 (God looked at everything He made, and found it good)

Then God said, "*Let the water teem with an abundance of living creatures, and on the earth let birds fly beneath the dome of the sky.*" And so it happened: God created the great sea monsters and all kinds of swimming creatures with which the water teems, and all kinds of winged birds. God saw how good it was, and God blessed them, saying, "*Be fertile, multiply, and fill the water of the seas; and let the birds multiply on the earth.*" Evening came, and morning followed - the fifth day.

Then God said, "*Let the earth bring forth all kinds of living creatures: cattle, creeping things, and wild animals of all kinds.*" And so it happened: God made all kinds of wild animals, all kinds of cattle, and all kinds of creeping things of the earth. God saw how good it was.

For Reflection: Consider how God delights in His creation. In using God's gift of imagination, see how God was working as He gathered all of the waters. What images come to mind as I witness God's creative activity? What is that experience like seeing it all unfold?

Prayer 3. Read Genesis 1:26-31, 2:1-4a (The Lord God formed man out of dust)

Then God said: "*Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and the cattle, and over all the wild animals and all the creatures that crawl on the ground.*" God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them, saying: "*Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that move on the earth.*"

God also said: "*See, I give you every seed-bearing plant all over the earth and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit on it to be your food; and to all the animals of the land, all the birds of the air, and all the living creatures that crawl on the ground, I give all the green plants for food.*" And so it happened. God looked at everything he had made, and he found it very good. Evening came, and morning followed - the sixth day.

For Reflection: Imagine being there with God the Father, creating you, forming you, and breathing into you, your very life. What does God's breath feel like? What feelings arise? Spend some time imagining God gazing in delight upon all He created. What is that like for you?

Prayer 4. Read Psalm 8 (How awesome is Your name)

For the leader; "upon the gittith." A psalm of David.

O LORD, our Lord, how awesome is your name through all the earth!

You have set your majesty above the heavens!

Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have drawn a defense against your foes, to silence enemy and avenger.

When I see your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and stars that you set in place -

What are humans that you are mindful of them, mere mortals that you care for them?

Yet you have made them little less than a god, crowned them with glory and honor.

You have given them rule over the works of your hands, put all things at their feet:

All sheep and oxen, even the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, the fish of the sea, and whatever swims the paths of the seas.

O LORD, our Lord, how awesome is your name through all the earth!

For Reflection: What words of David speak for you? What thoughts, images, memories, feelings, and emotions spring forth from within you?

Prayer 5. Read Psalm 104 (Bless the Lord, my soul!)

Bless the LORD, my soul! LORD, my God, you are great indeed! You are clothed with majesty and glory, robed in light as with a cloak. You spread out the heavens like a tent; you raised your palace upon the waters.

You make the clouds your chariot; you travel on the wings of the wind. You make the winds your messengers, flaming fire, your ministers. You fixed the earth on its foundation, never to be moved. The ocean covered it like a garment; above the mountains stood the waters. At your roar they took flight; at the sound of your thunder, they fled. They rushed up the mountains, down the valleys to the place you had fixed for them.

You set a limit they cannot pass; never again will they cover the earth. You made springs flow into channels that wind among the mountains. They give drink to every beast of the field; here wild asses quench their thirst.

Beside them the birds of heaven nest; among the branches they sing. You water the mountains from your palace; by your labor the earth abounds. You raise grass for the cattle and plants for our beasts of burden. You bring bread from the earth, and wine to gladden our hearts, Oil to make our faces gleam, food to build our strength.

The trees of the LORD drink their fill, the cedars of Lebanon, which you planted. There the birds build their nests; junipers are the home of the stork. The high mountains are for wild goats; the rocky cliffs, a refuge for badgers.

You made the moon to mark the seasons, the sun that knows the hour of its setting. You bring darkness and night falls, then all the beasts of the forest roam abroad. Young lions roar for prey; they seek their food from God. When the sun rises, they steal away and rest in their dens.

People go forth to their work, to their labor till evening falls. How varied are your works, LORD! In wisdom you have wrought them all; the earth is full of your creatures.

Look at the sea, great and wide! It teems with countless beings, living things both large and small. Here ships ply their course; here Leviathan, your creature, plays. All of these looks to you to give them food in due time.

When you give to them, they gather; when you open your hand, they are well filled. When you hide your face, they are lost. When you take away their breath, they perish and return to the dust from which they came.

When you send forth your breath, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth.

May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD be glad in these works!

If God glares at the earth, it trembles; if God touches the mountains, they smoke!

I will sing to the LORD all my life; I will sing praise to my God while I live.

May my theme be pleasing to God; I will rejoice in the LORD. May sinners vanish from the earth, and the wicked be no more. Bless the LORD, my soul! Hallelujah!

For Reflection: Where have you seen God's continuing creativity in creation, in yourself, and in others? Where do I notice His continued presence in the created world around me? Where have I rejoiced in the Lord today?

Prayer 6. Repetition: Select from the previous scriptures to pray with again. Choose from those that brought movements in prayer. Consolations: being lifted up, felt presence of God. Desolations: struggle, dryness, uncomfortable, a felt sense of a distance from God.

For Reflection: What about God's creation reminds me of God's love and care? When have I felt God's faithfulness in my life? How does God's creative presence in my life overflow into my relationships?

Prayer Period Gathering the Graces: Review and savor God's gifts to you. Make notes for sharing with your spiritual director or your faith-sharing group.

Additional Scripture:

Psalm 33 (The Lord's word is true)

Psalm 100 (The Lord, our Maker)

Sirach 33:13 (Hands of the Creator) Like clay in the hands of a potter, to be molded according to his pleasure, so are men in the hands of their Creator, to be assigned by him their function.