

An Interfaith Requiem for the Species

A Celebration of All Souls

By Randy Morris and Molly Young Brown

Saturday, November 1, 2008 7:00 p.m.

Setting: *The chancel is set up with a many-branched tree of life in the center. Luminarias line the windowsills, their candles illuminating pictures of endangered species. The room light is low. Slide shows in a continuous loop are projected on two screens toward the back of the chancel, showing pictures of endangered and extinct species throughout the liturgy. People have made twenty-five icons of the species to carry in procession, twenty endangered or threatened and five extinct. Extra icons are arranged in the narthex and as they come in, people are invited to choose one and be part of the procession to come later. Microphones are set up, the Rutter Requiem is ready to be played on the church sound system. Videos are cued up to play through a computer and a screen for them is ready to move into place. A low-pitched hand bell is ready.*

1) Introduction and Welcome – Molly Brown

We at St. Andrew's want to welcome each of you here tonight. This liturgical work of art we have created is meant to be ecumenical in nature, and though it is anchored in Christian tradition, our intention is to honor all faith traditions. And along those lines, we especially want to invite and welcome Coyote, that Native American mythic trickster. You see, we are not pros at this. We have put together this event with a lot of audio-visual details and as everyone knows, that means things could go wrong. So, we decided it would be inadvisable NOT to invite Coyote. So we welcome him and ask him to go kindly on us tonight.

Also with us this evening, joining us in spirit from Churchill, Manitoba, is Chris Christensen of St. Mark's Cathedral and a member of the Bishop's Committee for the Environment. At this moment Chris is with Leeann Myers and others from Polar Bears International on Hudson's Bay on a pilgrimage to observe polar bears.

This is part of what Chris writes: "As our environmental crisis grows more serious by the day, I mourn for the species that are being lost, and among them is the polar bear, facing almost certain extinction as global warming destroys the icy habitat to which they are so magnificently adapted.

I want to experience these magnificent creatures while they still exist in a natural environment. I am an amateur photographer, and I hope to capture some stunning photos—but I cannot forget that the polar bear will very probably disappear in the next 50 years (or sooner, if the reports of accelerated arctic warming in this morning's paper are accurate!) So I go to say "Requiem" for another of God's creatures that is being destroyed by the unforeseen consequences of our rush to exploit the earth rather than care for it."

So welcome Chris and Leeann.
And welcome everyone.

The idea for this liturgy came up last spring when St. Andrew's hosted an "Awakening the Dreamer" workshop. It challenged us to step up and do something to help overcome the apathy that shields us from the truth of what our world is becoming in this time of environmental peril. Randy Morris and I, sponsored by the St. Andrew's Creation Keepers group and with the contributions of many others, created this Requiem for the Species as something we could do to help bring about the Great Turning of our world--away from catastrophe and toward a sustainable civilization. Now is the time. Right now there is a little bit of time to make a difference to future generations. It's the world our own grandchildren are going to inherit that we are talking about.

The first step is to feel the loss of a world we have taken for granted. All these animals and butterflies, plants and fish around us this evening are either extinct or in danger of becoming extinct in a few more years. The ones with us tonight are only a small percentage of the thousands of endangered species worldwide. Many of these are local Pacific Northwest species. They bear witness to the reality of our world. In mourning their loss we touch the place of yearning in our own hearts.

So let's begin with these words from the rite for the burial of the dead: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; even so saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labors.

2) Hymn: For the Beauty of the Earth, from Missa Gaia by Paul Winter

The hymn is introduced with a violin medley by Randy Morris. After the introduction the people rise and sing.

*For the beauty of the earth, sing, oh sing today
Of the skies and of our birth, sing, oh sing, always.
Nature human and divine, all around us lies.
Lord of all to Thee we raise grateful hymns of praise.*

3) Invoking the Beings of Three Times: The Partnership of Generations -- Randy Morris

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

We call upon the beings of the three times to be with us here in this hour, joining us in forming a partnership of generations that can harness the universal power of Love in order to glorify and sanctify the beauty of our beloved planet Earth, and of her exquisitely beautiful creatures. Such a partnership of generations is capable of great things.

We call upon all those who have gone before us, our ancestors and teachers. You who have walked and loved and faithfully tended this earth, be present to us now that we may carry on the legacy you have bequeathed us. Thank you for making possible these bodies through which we worship the created order. We ask you to make yourselves known to us and help us as we struggle to become aware of how our gifts and talents can best be used to further the continuity of life. Aloud and silently in our hearts we say your names and picture your faces...

The people chant three times:

Gather with us now in this hour. Join with us now in this place.

We call upon the beings of the present, all you with whom we live and work on this endangered planet, all you with whom we share this brink of time. Fellow humans and brothers and sisters of other species, help us to open to our collective will and wisdom. Guide us in the knowledge that what we do unto the least of our fellow creatures, we do unto ourselves. Help us to feel in our hearts and bones the interconnectedness of all beings in the great web of life. Aloud and silently in our hearts, we say your names and picture your faces...

The people chant three times:

Gather with us now in this hour. Join with us now in this place.

We call upon the beings of the future. All you who will come after us on this Earth, be with us now. All you who are waiting to be born in the ages to come, it is for your sakes, too, that we work to heal our world. We cannot picture your faces or say your names—you have none yet—but we feel the reality of your claim on life. It helps us to be faithful in the work that must be done, so that there will be for you, as there was for our ancestors, blue sky, fruitful land, clear waters. You complete the partnership of generations. We bless the promise you hold of a vibrant, living Earth for ages to come. Silently in our hearts, we picture your faces...

The people chant three times:

Gather with us now in this hour. Join with us now in this place.

4) Procession of the Species -- Molly Brown

People carrying icons in the procession are invited to gather silently in the narthex. Accompanied by a tolling bell, icons of the species are brought forward to the Tree of Life. The pace is slow and solemn as the bell tolls. A funeral bell. In turn, each icon is placed on a branch of the Tree of Life. As it is placed, the person carrying it calls out the name of the species and its status (extinct or endangered). After each extinct one is placed on a branch, the remainder of that branch is cut off with clippers. The end of the branch falls to the floor and stays there to signify that that particular expression of life on Earth is gone forever. The branches holding the endangered ones remain whole, but the fragility is clear.

The participants stand in a circle around the tree until the ritual is completed.

After the name of each species is spoken, the people respond:

We bear witness to you, _____ (name of species).

5) Prayer for the Species -- Randy Morris

Let us pray.

Dear animal and plant beings of this sweet earth, thank you for gracing us with your presence. We honor the homes where you lived. We honor your breathing, mating, birthing, infancy, parenthood and return to the womb of creation. Forgive us our trespasses on you, and help us to bear the pain of your departure. We celebrate your time on earth by singing this song:

The beginning note is sounded with the bell from the procession and the people sing a reprise of For the Beauty of the Earth:

**We bear witness to you all, sing, oh sing today
You are always in our hearts, sing, oh sing always.
Nature human and divine, all around us lies.
Lord of all to Thee we raise grateful hymns of praise.**

6) Rutter Requiem, 1st movement, Requiem aeternam

*Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine: et lux perpetua luceat eis.
Te decet hymnus, Deus in Sion: et tibi reddetur votum in Jerusalem.
Exaudi orationem meam, ad te omnis caro veniet.
Kyrie eleison. Christe eleison. Kyrie eleison.*

(Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord: and may light perpetual shine upon them. Thou, O God, art praised in Sion: and unto thee shall the vow be performed in Jerusalem. Thou that hearest the prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come. Lord have mercy. Christ have mercy. Lord have mercy.)
(From the Requiem Mass)

7) Honoring Our Pain for the World:

Reading: Isaiah 24:4-5 -- Sharon Wilson

The earth dries up and withers,
the world languishes and withers,
the heavens languish together with the earth
The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants,
for they have transgressed laws,
violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant.

Video: *Environmental Sustainability, The Pachemama Alliance*

Reading: *Earth Prayers, U.N. Environmental Sabbath Program* -- Gordon Baxter

We have forgotten who we are

We have forgotten who we are
We have alienated ourselves from the unfolding of the cosmos
We have become estranged from the movements of the earth
We have turned our backs on the cycles of life.

We have forgotten who we are.

We have sought only our own security
We have exploited simply for our own ends
We have distorted our knowledge
We have abused our power.

We have forgotten who we are.

Now the land is barren
And the waters are poisoned
and the air is polluted.

We have forgotten who we are.

Now the forests are dying
And the creatures are disappearing
And humans are despairing.

We have forgotten who we are.

We ask forgiveness
We ask for the gift of remembering
We ask for the strength to change.

We have forgotten who we are.

8) Requiem, 2nd movement. *Out of the Deep*

*Dance interpretation by St. Andrew's Liturgical Dancers
Marianne Mercereau, Bailey Mercereau, Jean Kercheval, Sarah Kercheval,
Jennifer McClure*

Out of the deep have I called unto thee, O Lord: Lord, hear my voice.
O let thine ears consider well: the voice of my complaint.
If thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss: O Lord, who may
abide it?

For there is mercy with thee; therefore shalt thou be feared.
I look for the Lord; my soul doth wait for him: in his word is my trust.
My soul fleeth unto the Lord: before the morning watch, I say, before the
morning watch.
O Israel, trust in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy: and with him is
plenteous redemption.
And he shall redeem Israel: from all his sins.
(Psalm 130)

9) The Council of All Beings -- Melissa Brown and Molly Brown

The Bestiary, Joanna Macy

short-tailed albatross
whooping crane
gray wolf
peregrine falcon
hawksbill turtle
jaguar
rhinoceros

In Geneva, the international tally of endangered species, kept up to date in looseleaf volumes, is becoming too heavy to lift. Where do we now record the passing of life? What funerals or farewells are appropriate?
(*etc.*, 10 stanzas. Complete text can be found in the appendix.)

10) Requiem 3rd movement. Pie Jesu

Pie Jesu Domine, dona eis requiem.

Pie Jesu Domine, dona eis sempiternam requiem.

(Blessed Lord Jesus, grant them rest. Blessed Lord Jesus, grant them eternal rest.)
(from the Dies Irae of the Requiem Mass)

11) Seeing the World in New Ways:

Reading: Deuteronomy 30:19 -- Sharon Wilson

I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live...

Reading: From *Ishmael* by Daniel Quinn -- Randy Morris (in gorilla mask) and Peter Strimer

Introduction (Molly Brown): The novel, Ishmael, by Daniel Quinn begins with an ad in a newspaper: Teacher seeks pupil. Must have an earnest desire to save the world. Apply in person. The teacher was Ishmael, a very large, wise, and philosophical gorilla.

“The meaning of the world . . . I think the third chapter of Genesis had it right. It’s a garden—the gods’ garden. I say this even though I myself very much doubt that gods have anything to do with it. I just find this a wholesome and encouraging way to think of it.”

“I understand.”

“And there are two trees in the garden, one for the gods and one for us. The one for them is the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and the one for us is the Tree of Life. But we can only find the Tree of Life if we stay in the garden—and we can only stay in the garden if we keep our hands off the gods’ tree.”

Ishmael gave me a nod of encouragement.

“Divine intentions . . . It would seem . . . There is a sort of tendency in evolution, wouldn’t you say? If you start with those ultrasimple critters in the ancient seas and move up step by step to everything we see here now—and beyond—then you have to observe a tendency toward . . . complexity. And toward self-awareness and intelligence. Wouldn’t you agree?”

“Yes.”

“That is, all sorts of creatures on this planet appear to be on the verge of attaining that self-awareness and intelligence. So it’s definitely not just humans that the gods are after. We were never meant to be the only players on this stage. Apparently the gods intend this planet to be a garden *filled* with creatures that are self-aware and intelligent.”

“So it would appear. And if this is so, then man’s destiny would seem to be plain.”

“Yes. Amazingly enough, it is plain--because man is the first of all these. He’s the trailblazer, the pathfinder. His destiny is to be the first to learn that creatures like man have a choice: They can try to thwart the gods and perish in the attempt—or they can stand aside and make some room for all the rest. But it’s more than that. His destiny is to be the father of them all—I don’t mean by direct descent. By giving all the rest their chance—the whales and the dolphins and the chimps and the raccoons—he becomes in some sense their progenitor. . . . Oddly enough, it’s even grander than the destiny the Takers dreamed up for us.”

“How so?”

“Just think. In a billion years, whatever is around then, *whoever* is around then, says, ‘Man? Oh yes, *man!* What a wonderful creature he was! It was within his grasp to destroy the entire world and to trample all our futures into the dust—but he saw the light before it was too late and pulled back. He pulled back and gave the rest of us our chance. He showed us all how it *had to be done* if the world was to go on being a garden forever. Man was the role model for us all!”

“Not a shabby destiny.”

“Not a shabby destiny by any means. And it occurs to me that this . . .”

“Yes?”

“This gives a little shape to the story. The world is a very, very fine place. It wasn’t a mess. It didn’t need to be conquered and ruled by man. In other words, the world doesn’t need to belong to man—but it *does* need man to belong to it. *Some* creature had to be the first to go through this, had to see that there were two trees in the garden, one that was good for gods and one that was good for creatures. *Some* creature had to find the way, and if that happened, then . . . there was just no limit to what could

happen here. In other words, man does have a place in the world, but it's not his place to *rule*. The gods have that in hand. Man's place is to be the first. Man's place is to be the first *without being the last*. Man's place is to figure out how it's *possible* to do that—and then to make some room for all the rest who are capable of becoming what he's become. And maybe, when the time comes, it's man's place to be the teacher of all the rest who are capable of becoming what he's become. Not the only teacher, not the ultimate teacher. Maybe only the first teacher, the kindergarten teacher—but even that wouldn't be too shabby. And do you know what?"

"What?"

"All along, I've been saying to myself, 'Yes, this is all very interesting, but what good is it? This isn't going to change anything!'"

"And now?"

"*This* is what we need. Not just *stopping* things. Not just *less* of things. People need something positive to work for. They need a vision of something that . . . I don't know. Something that . . ."

"I think what you're groping for is that people need more than to be scolded, more than to be made to feel stupid and guilty. They need more than a vision of doom. They need a vision of the world and of themselves that inspires them."

"Yes. Definitely. Stopping pollution is not inspiring. Sorting your trash is not inspiring. Cutting down on fluorocarbons is not inspiring. But this . . . thinking of ourselves in a new way, thinking of the world in a new way . . . This . . ."

I let it go. What the hell, he knew what I was trying to say.

12) Requiem 4th movement. Sanctus

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth.

Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua.

Hosanna in excelsis.

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.

Hosanna in excelsis.

(Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory: hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.)

(From the Requiem Mass)

13) Homily--Randy Morris (Full text can be found in the appendix)

14) Requiem 5th movement. Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona eis requiem.

(Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, grant them rest.)

Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery.

He cometh up, and is cut down like a flower; he fleeth as it were a shadow.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona eis requiem.

In the midst of life we are in death: of whom may we seek for succour?

Agnes Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona eis requiem.

I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.

(Latin text from the Requiem Mass; English texts from the Burial Service, 1662 Book of Common Prayer)

15) **Reading and guided meditation on the Gray Wolf**

-- Molly Brown

Synopsis of the history of the Gray Wolf in America. (Full text can be found in the appendix)

Reading from Barry Holstun Lopez, *Of Wolves and Men*

“. . . in the twentieth century, whether out of guilt or because we have reached such a level of civilization as to allow us the thought, we are looking for a new wolf. We seem eager to be corrected, to know how wrong our ideas about wolves have been, how complex the creature really is, how ultimately unfathomable. What we are looking for, I think, is a way to return mystery to animals, and distance and selfhood, and thereby dignity. To quote [Henry] Beston . . . we want to feel that animals ‘are not brethren, they are not underlings, they are other nations, caught with ourselves in the web of life . . .’

Almost like errant children, we seem to want forgiveness from wolves, and I think that takes great courage.

. . . When, from the prisons of our cities, we look out to wilderness, when we reach intellectually for such abstractions as the privilege of leading a life free from nonsensical conventions, or one without guilt or subterfuge—in short, a life of integrity—I think we can turn to wolves. We *do* sense in them courage, stamina, and a straightforwardness of living; we do sense that they are somehow correct in the universe and we are somehow still at odds with it.

As our sense of sharing the planet with other creatures grows—and perhaps that is ultimately the goal of natural history—the deep contemplation of wolves may be seen as part of an attempt to nurture the humbler belief that there is more to the world than mankind.”

Guided meditation:

And now I'd like to invite you to shift your perception to that of the wolf, to see through wolf eyes, to hear through wolf ears, and, if you are so moved, to join in wolf song with the recording for about a minute.

Take a moment to be comfortable, breathe in and out. Listen with wolf ears. Hear the cubs sleeping in the den. Hear the family up on the ridge socializing. You can go, another wolf will watch the den. Run through the sparkling snow on wolf paws. It's cold but the river isn't frozen. Water makes lapping sounds on the beach. The moon is setting and the sun will soon rise. But for now the stars are glorious. You join the others, nuzzling, yipping. It's

all for joy and good feeling. The chorus begins.

(A portion of the wolf audio recording, Wolf Talk, is played through the sound system. After about a minute the volume is slowly taken down.)

Time to go back to the den. The others will soon hunt and bring back food for the family. The cubs are still sleeping. All is peace. Now you return to your human form. You hear with human ears. The traffic outside. You see with human eyes. This church full of candlelight. Your hands touch wood. Breathe in and out.

16) Requiem 6th movement. *The Lord is my Shepherd*

The Lord is my shepherd: therefore can I lack nothing.

He shall feed me in a green pasture: and lead me forth beside the waters of comfort.

He shall convert my soul: and bring me forth in the paths of righteousness, for his Name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff comfort me.

Thou shalt prepare a table before me against them that trouble me: thou hast annointed my head with oil, and my cup shall be full.

But thy loving-kindness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

(Psalm 23)

17) Reading: *Earth Prayers, John Seed -- Gordon Baxter*

We call upon the spirit of evolution, the miraculous force that inspires rocks and dust to weave themselves into biology. You have stood by us for millions and billions of years—do not forsake us now. Empower us and awaken in us pure and dazzling creativity. You that can turn scales into feathers, seawater to blood, caterpillars to butterflies, metamorphose our species, awaken in us the powers that we need to survive the present crisis and evolve into more aeons of our solar journey.

Awaken in us a sense of who we truly are: tiny ephemeral blossoms on the Tree of Life. Make the purposes and destiny of that tree our own purpose and destiny.

Fill each of us with love for our true Self, which includes all of the creatures and plants and landscapes of the world. Fill us with a powerful urge for the wellbeing and continual unfolding of this Self.

May we speak in all human councils on behalf of the animals and plants and landscapes of the Earth.

May we shine with a pure inner passion that will spread rapidly through these leaden times.

May we all awaken to our true and only nature—none other than the nature of Gaia, this living planet Earth.

We call upon the power which sustains the planets in their orbits, that wheels our

Milky Way in its 200-million-year spiral, to imbue our personalities and our relationships with harmony, endurance and joy. Fill us with a sense of immense time so that our brief, flickering lives may truly reflect the work of vast ages past and also the millions of years of evolution whose potential lies in our trembling hands.

O stars, lend us your burning passion.

O silence, give weight to our voice.

We ask for the presence of the spirit of Gaia.

18) Requiem 7th movement. *Lux Aeterna*

Dance interpretation by St. Andrew's Liturgical Dancers

I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours: even so saith the Spirit.

Lux aeterna luceat eis, Domine: cum sanctis tuis in aeternum, quia pius es.

Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine: et lux perpetua luceat eis.

(Eternal light shine upon them, O Lord: with all thy saints for evermore, for thy mercy's sake.

Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord: and may light perpetual shine upon them.)

(English text from the Burial Service (slightly altered): Latin text from the Requiem Mass)

19) Video: *Hope, The Pachemama Alliance*

20) Closing -- Randy Morris

As we come near the close of our Requiem for the Species, we would like to invite you to spend another moment in conversation with your neighbor, recognizing them as fellow travelers, born with you into this time of the Great Turning. You are invited to explore these two questions together: Love takes the form of sorrow and yearning; how do you feel it moving through your soul at this moment? How, when you leave this place, can you express it? Let's just take a few moments for conversation...

And now, for a closing prayer.

Dear Lord, Great Spirit, Tunkashila, WakanTankan, Grandmothers and Grandfathers, Shekinah, Mother Goddess, Allah, Sophia, Buddha Mind, Brahman, Shiva, Vishnu, the Great Mysterious—these are but a few of the names through which you make your presence known to us. Thank you for this opportunity to gather in community with people of many faiths to honor the splendor of your creation.

Hear our prayers!

We have traveled the road of sorrow and yearning that cuts through the heart of the universe, as it does through our own hearts.

Hear our prayers!

We have witnessed the pain of the world.

Hear our prayers!

We have imagined the extinction of species, including our own.

Hear our prayers!

We are reminded of how precious is the gift of life.

Thank you for this life!

We thank the future beings for being with us today.

Thank you, future beings!

We thank our ancestors from the past for being with us today.

Thank you, ancestors!

We hold faith that in partnership with the generations of past, present, and future, we will bring about a sustainable world that honors all of God's creatures.

Praise be to God!

Blessings upon you all for coming to this service and may your journey from here be filled with wonder and gratitude for the interdependent web of life. Alleluia, Alleluia!

Alleluia, Alleluia!

21) Closing Song: *My Two Hands Hold the Earth* -- Randy Morris

We want to leave you with an earth-song in your heart, so let me teach you this tune!

My Spirit's in the sky, sky, sky.

My feet are on the ground, ground, ground.

And what about my blood, it's from the sea,

And what about my bones, like the mountains be.

And oh, my hands, oh my hands, with my hands I believe I can hold the earth.

My two hands hold the earth, my two hands hold the earth.

Go in Peace!

(Total time: about 2 ½ hours)

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Lopez, Barry Holstun, Of Wolves and Men, Simon & Schuster, 1978.

Rutter, John, Requiem and I will Lift Up Mine Eyes, Collegium records.

Winter, Paul. Missa Gaia/Earth Mass: A Mass in Celebration of Mother Earth (Recorded Live in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine and the Grand Canyon), Living Music.

“Wolf Talk”, Part 2, from the album, Wolf Talk by Global Journey.

Videos from Pachemama Alliance. (For more information, go to HYPERLINK "http://www.awakeningthedreamer.org" www.awakeningthedreamer.org)

Holy Bible, NRSV

The Book of Common Prayer

APPENDIX

1. Sunday after church forums in preparation for the liturgy:

October 5: (St. Francis Day): Gretchen Hayslip and Gail Coburn. Discussion about endangered and extinct species, with special focus on Pacific Northwest species.

October 12: Randy Morris. Discussion of deep ecology with special focus on “The Great Turning” and the extended Partnership of Generations, “The Beings of Three Times”.

October 26: Molly Brown. Discussion of Tree of Life imagery and art workshop to begin making icons of the endangered and extinct species.

Saturday, November 1: 2:00 p.m. art workshop for making icons and working on the Tree of Life. 5:00 p.m. potluck dinner (or simple supper). 7:00 p.m. liturgy.

2. *The Bestiary*, Joanna Macy

short-tailed albatross
whooping crane
gray wolf
peregrine falcon
hawksbill turtle
jaguar
rhinoceros

In Geneva, the international tally of endangered species, kept up to date in looseleaf volumes, is becoming too heavy to lift. Where do we now record the passing of life? What funerals or farewells are appropriate?

reed warbler
swallowtail butterfly
Manx shearwater
Indian python
howler monkey
sperm whale
blue whale

Dive me deep, brother whale, in this time we have left. Deep in our mother ocean where once I swam, gilled and finned. The salt from those early seas still runs in my tears. tears are too meager now. Give me a song . . . a song for a sadness too vast for my heart, for a rage too wild for my throat.

anteater
antelope
grizzly bear
brown bear

Bactrian camel

Nile crocodile

American alligator

Ooze me, alligator, in the mud whence I came. Belly me slow in the rich primordial soup, cradle of our molecules. Let me wallow again, before we drain your swamp, before we pave it over and blast it to ash.

gray bat

ocelot

marsh mouse

blue pike

red kangaroo

Aleutian goose

Audouin's seagull

Quick, lift off. Sweep me high over the coast and out, farther out. Don't land here. Oilspills coat the beach, rocks, sea. I cannot spread my wings glued with tar. Fly me from what we have done, fly me far.

golden parakeet

African ostrich

Florida panther

Galapagos penguin

Imperial pheasant

leopard

Utah prairie dog

Hide me a hedgerow, badger. Can't you find one? Dig me a tunnel through leaf-mold and roots, under the trees that once defined our fields. My heart is bulldozed and plowed over. Burrow me a labyrinth deeper than longing.

thick-billed parrot

zone-tailed pigeon

desert bandicoot

Southern bald eagle

California condor

lotus blue butterfly

Crawl me out of here, caterpillar. Spin a cocoon. Wind me to sleep in a shroud of silk, where in patience my bones will dissolve. I'll wait as long as all creation if only it will come again—and I take wing.

Atlantic Ridley turtle

pearly mussel

helmuted hornbill

sea otter

humpback whale

monk seal

harp seal

Swim me out beyond the ice floes, mama. Where are you? Boots squeeze my ribs, clubs drum my fur, the white world goes black with the taste of my blood.

gorilla

gibbon

sand gazelle
swamp deer
musk deer
cheetah
chinchilla
Asian elephant
African elephant

Sway me slowly through the jungle. There still must be jungle somewhere, my heart drips with green secrets. Hose me down by the waterhole; there is buckshot in my hide. Tell me old stories while you can remember.

fan-tailed flycatcher
flapshell tortoise
crested ibis
hook-billed kite
bobcat
frigate bird

In the time when his world, like ours, was ending, Noah had a list of the animals, too. We picture him standing by the gangplank, calling their names, checking them off on his scroll. Now we also are checking them off.

ivory-billed woodpecker
brown pelican
Florida manatee
Canada goose

We reenact Noah's ancient drama, but in reverse, like a film running backwards, the animals exiting.

ferret
curlew
cougar
wolf

Your tracks are growing fainter. Wait. Wait. This is a hard time. Don't leave us alone in a world we have wrecked.

3. **Homily for "An Interfaith Requiem for the Species"**

November 1, 2008

Randy Morris, Ph.D.

(A homily delivered at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church at a celebration for All Souls Day entitled "An Interfaith Requiem for the Species")

Good evening, everyone. It is a great pleasure to welcome you to St. Andrew's Episcopal Church on this special occasion, a celebration and remembrance of the creatures who live with us on this beautiful planet. I want to give a special thanks to Molly Brown, through whom the inspiration for this liturgy first came. I like to imagine that her consciousness was the field upon which Sophia or Holy Wisdom made her

presence known. Apparently, Sophia insisted on a Requiem during All Soul's Day, that time of the year when a 'thin place' develops between the world of the living and the world of spirit, and the opportunity arises for the sacred to incarnate in the world of time and space. By framing my thanks in this way, I want to suggest that such Sophianic promptings are happening all the time, to everyone here gathered. My thanks to Molly for modeling how to act upon Sophia's call. I believe that in these times, in this historical moment, we are all being called upon to act on the hints and promptings welling up from the deep imagination. If it is true that we humans are the result of billions of years of evolution, then we are a bit of nature observing herself, sentient beings with a special responsibility to steward the Earth. Never before has the Earth needed us more. The rate of extinction of species that is taking place in our lifetimes has not been seen in 65 million years, since the die-off that ushered the dinosaurs off of the world stage and gave rise to the era of mammals. The psychologist Roger Walsh gives us insight into some of the spiritual dimensions of what is happening when he says, "What is remarkable about this era is not only the awesome scope and urgency of our problems. It is that for the first time in millions of years of evolution, all our major threats are caused by humans. Problems such as overpopulation, pollution, poverty and nuclear weapons stem directly from our own behavior, and from the fears and fantasies, desires and delusions that power this behavior. The state of the world, in other words, reflects the state of our minds. The conflicts outside us reflect the conflicts inside us, and the insanity without mirrors the insanity within. ... The challenge is to optimize our individual and collective maturation. How best to do so is no longer an academic question but an evolutionary imperative."

The Buddhist activist Joanna Macy calls this the time of the Great Turning, when we are confronted with the necessity of transforming an industrially based, empire-seeking civilization into a society based on sustainable earth community. If we do not navigate this transformation, we will be subject to the immense suffering of the Great Unraveling. Macy outlines three parts to the Great Turning – holding actions in defense of the earth, envisioning sustainable alternatives and creating the spiritual and psychological resources needed to envision a new way of being. As a result of being present here at an interfaith liturgy dedicated to mourning the dead and dying species on our planet, we are engaged in the third process, that of re-visioning the spiritual resources of the human species. What does it mean to stand in solidarity with others of a faith different from your own, yet dedicated to the preservation of our island home, Mother Earth? I offer you three different ways to think about this question.

First, the notion that any particular faith has the final answer as to the nature of God has to be placed in the history books as an important but outmoded development in the religious history of humanity. God is the formless form of forms, the implicate system of all systems, the Great Mysterious beyond all names. What we need now is a renewed commitment to the idea of deep ecumenism, the sense that all spiritual traditions are welcome as long as they acknowledge the mystery that resides at the heart of creation. As soon as a religion claims to know that mystery, the mystery disappears and a fundamentalism is born. In contrast, deep ecumenism honors all of the various faiths as essential portals through which the mysteries of the universe pour into human manifestation. Each portal welcomes a different face of the divine. All are necessary for

a complete picture, all belong to the common spiritual heritage of humanity. Furthermore, we need to understand that just as different faiths are required to encompass the whole, so the varieties of individuals foster unique revelations of God. Is it not more likely that God or the Holy Spirit provides individual revelations to correspond with the uniqueness of the person receiving them? If so, the truth about God will only be heard in the concert of many voices.

A second way to think about the virtues of interfaith worship is to understand that this island home we call earth is in deep peril, which means we are too, and we are all in it together. As the eco-philosopher David Orr says, "... the great discovery of the modern era is not how to make nuclear fire, or alter our genes, or communicate at the speed of light but, rather, the discovery of our interconnectedness and implicated-ness in the web of life. What Thomas Berry calls the 'Great Work' of the 21st Century will be to comprehend what that awareness means in every area of life in order to calibrate human demands with what the Earth can sustain." And what we discover when we wake up from the collective trance that would have us sleep through humanity's demise, is that suffering abounds on this planet. The Great Turning is already the Great Unraveling for large swaths of humanity in other parts of the world. What is being asked for in these times, especially of us as North American consumers, is the capacity of soul to face the despair that threatens to overwhelm us. Thich Nhat Hanh says it best, "What we most need to do to save our world is to hear within us the sounds of the Earth crying." What Joanna Macy has shown us through her decades of 'despair and empowerment' work is that when we turn to face the terror of what is happening to our planet, new resources of courage and power surge through the human soul and into the world. We are reminded that we are not isolated individuals responsible only to ourselves and our immediate family, but that we are powerful beings that belong to an intricate web of inter-connection with the beings of all times and of all places. Joanna works with what she calls 'deep time' in which the forgotten beings of the future, who have their own claim to the right to life, join with those of us who are alive now and those who have come before, to create a 'partnership of generations'. Deep time work gives dignity and purpose to our presence in these bodies at this time. Living in the time of the Great Turning presents us with the opportunity to live the most meaningful lives ever lived in the history of our species, for surely we are all related, and all things are related to us.

And a third virtue of interfaith worship is to recognize that a common denominator of all faith communities, something that binds us together as a living practice, is our capacity for gratitude. Joanna Macy tells us that "Gratitude for the gift of life is the primary wellspring of all religions, the hallmark of the mystic, the source of all true art. ... (It) quiets our scattered minds and brings us back to Source. It reconnects us with basic goodness and our personal power. It helps us to be more fully present to our world." The open secret of gratitude, she says, is that it is not dependent on external circumstances. "It's like a setting or channel that we can switch to at any moment, no matter what's going on around us. It helps us connect to our basic right to be here, like the breath does. It's a stance of the soul. In systems theory, each part contains the whole. Gratitude is the kernel that flowers into everything we know." Surely gratitude

for the gift of life is the foundation stone for a global spirituality. It is where the healing of the earth begins.

So we are grateful that Sophia visited Molly Brown, that John Rutter wrote his Requiem, that you have chosen to be here this evening. We are grateful for these beautiful images of our companions on this planet, the animals and plants. We salute your willingness to bear witness to the passing of these magnificent creatures from their time on this earth. May our resolve be stronger for their sake's.

To honor the presence of each person here tonight, I would like to invite you to take a few minutes to turn to your neighbor in groups of two or three to introduce yourselves. Find out how each of you found your way here, and what each of you are seeking. I will ring a bell in about five minutes to prepare us for John Rutter's fifth movement.

Joanna Macy, "Gratitude: Where Healing the Earth Begins", Shambhala Sun, Nov. 2007.

David Orr, "Four Challenges of Sustainability", found at www.ratical.org/globalize/4CofS.html, 2003.

Roger Walsh, The World of Shamanism: New Views of An Ancient Tradition, (Llewellyn Publications), 2007, p. 270.

4. A Brief Synopsis of the History of the Wolf in America — Molly Brown

Although it is impossible to know exactly how many wolves existed before European settlers came to North America, it is thought that there were as many as 400,000 of them.

The first wolf bounty law in America was passed in Massachusetts on November 9, 1630. The wolf had begun to disappear in the northeast before the end of the 18th century.

Trappers on the great plains killed wolves for their pelts which were worth \$2 by 1850

Ranchers started raising cattle and sheep on the plains at the same time the buffalo was decimated in the late 1800s. Wolves turned to livestock for food because the buffalo was gone.

In Montana in the period from 1883 to 1918, 80,730 wolves were bountied for \$342,64.

The federal government passed a law in 1915 providing for the extermination of wolves on federal lands. Between July 1, 1915 and June 30, 1942 when the program was terminated, 24,132 wolves, mostly in Colorado, Wyoming, Montana and the western Dakotas were killed.

No one knows the dates when the last wolves disappeared, but by 1945 there were only stragglers. Except for a few coming up from Mexico and moving south from British Columbia, there were no more gray wolves in the lower forty-eight states. Something similar happened in Canada.

Ways and reasons wolves were killed:

predator control

 cattle and sheep protection

 increase game animals for hunters

bounty hunting

pelt hunting

big game trophy

scapegoat for economic losses

They were:

trapped

shot

tortured

set on fire

their jaws torn out

their achilles tendons cut

dogs turned loose on them

starved because of overhunting of deer

died in captivity in zoos from ill health

ethanized because they couldn't be domesticated

they were poisoned with strychnine, arsenic, and cyanide on such a scale that millions of other animals—raccoons, black-footed ferrets, red foxes, ravens, red-tailed hawks, eagles, ground squirrels, wolverines—were killed incidentally in the process

they were shot from snowmobiles and airplanes for sport

they were extirpated as part of a drive to tame the wilderness

they were called the beast of waste and desolation, devil in disguise, werewolf

By the time of the passage of the Endangered Species Act in 1973, the gray wolf in the lower 48 states had lost 95% of its previous range and likely numbered only several hundred, living mostly in Minnesota and Michigan.

In 1978 the Fish and Wildlife Service revised its earlier listing to include the entire species of gray wolf (*Canis lupus*) as endangered throughout the lower 48 states of the United States, except in Minnesota, where the wolf was listed as threatened.

After a wolf restoration program brought their numbers back up to viable levels, those in the mountain-prairie region were removed from protection of the Endangered Species Act in the spring of 2008.

In September 2008 the Los Angeles Times reported this:

“No sooner were gray wolves delisted in March than sportsmen in Idaho, Montana and Wyoming began locking and loading. Wyoming officials declared 90% of the state a free-fire zone. . . . Through the early summer, an average of a wolf a day was being killed across the region. In all, at least 130 animals died since the delisting, or nearly 10% of the wolf population in the northern Rockies. Then, on July 21, a federal judge stopped the hunt.”

From a press release July 23, 2008

“Conservation Northwest has captured photographs of six wolf pups residing in the North Cascades . . . [this] is the first documented wolf pack in Washington State since the 1930s.”

*Seeing More Clearly
the Mountain We Want to Climb*
