

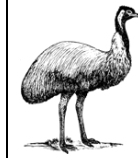
of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."

¹ Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished.
[NRSV Matthew 3:13-17; 4:1-2]

This is the Gospel of the Lord, ***praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.***

Sentence

For it is creation that waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; in the hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay.



Outback/Wilderness Sunday

We worship with creation in the outback

Year A

20th September 2020

Green

Prayer of the Day

God, our Creator, whose glory fills our planet,
help us to discern your vibrant presence among us
and our kin in creation, especially in the rocks, the sands and the plants of
the Outback.

Lift our spirits to rejoice with the wilderness of the Outback.

Help us empathise with all your creatures of the wilderness.

In the name of Christ, who reconciles and renews all things in creation.

Amen.

A reading from the Book of Joel,

Chapter 1 beginning at Verse 8

The mourning of the wild'; Some may assume that only humans suffer anguish when there is a disaster, whether from nature or war. Joel reminds us that at such times the ground mourns and the creatures of the wild cry out to God.

⁸ Lament like a virgin dressed in sackcloth for the husband of her youth.

⁹ The grain-offering and the drink-offering are cut off from the house of the Lord. The priests mourn, the ministers of the Lord.

¹⁰ The fields are devastated, the ground mourns; for the grain is destroyed, the wine dries up, the oil fails.

¹⁷ The seed shrivels under the clods, the storehouses are desolate; the granaries are ruined because the grain has failed.

¹⁸ How the animals groan! The herds of cattle wander about because there is no pasture for them; even the flocks of sheep are dazed.

¹⁹ To you, O Lord, I cry. For fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and flames have burned all the trees of the field.

²⁰ Even the wild animals cry to you because the watercourses are dried up, and fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness. [NRSV Joel 1:8-10, 17-20]

Hear the word of the Lord, ***thanks be to God***

Psalm 18:6-19

'The wild forces of creation'; The psalm writer remembers how God employed the fierce forces of creation to intervene and rescue him.

- ⁶ In my anguish I called to the Lord:
I cried for help to my God.
- ⁷ From his temple he heard my voice:
and my cry even came to his ears.
- ⁸ The earth heaved and quaked, the foundations of the hills were shaken:
they trembled because he was angry.
- ⁹ Smoke went out from his nostrils:
and a consuming fire from his mouth.
- ¹⁰ He parted the heavens and came down:
and there was darkness under his feet.
- ¹¹ He rode upon the cherubim, and flew:
he came swooping upon the wings of the wind.
- ¹² He made the darkness his covering:
and his canopy was thick clouds and watery darkness.
- ¹³ Out of his clouds, from the brightness before him;
broke hailstones and coals of fire.
- ¹⁴ The Lord thundered in the heavens:
the Most High uttered his voice.
- ¹⁵ He let loose his arrows, he scattered them on every side:
he hurled down lightnings with the roar of the thunderbolt.
- ¹⁶ The springs of the sea were uncovered:
and the foundations of the world laid bare.
- ¹⁷ At your rebuke, O Lord:
at the blast of the breath of your displeasure.
- ¹⁸ He reached down from on high, he took me:
he drew me out of the great waters.
- ¹⁹ He delivered me from my strongest enemy:
from my foes that were mightier than I.

A reading from the letter to the Romans, Chapter 8 beginning at Verse 18

'The groaning of creation'; The gospel message of this text makes it clear that not only human beings are waiting for liberation. Creation is also longing for that day, as a mother about to give birth.

¹⁸ I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; ²⁰ for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; ²³ and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

²⁶ Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. ²⁷ And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

[NRSV Romans 8:18-27]

Hear the word of the Lord, ***thanks be to God.***

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew, Chapter 3 beginning at verse 13

Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ.

When Jesus is baptised, the Spirit that fills all of Earth now fills Christ in a special way. In response, Jesus retires to the wilderness to connect with creation.

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" ¹⁵ But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. ¹⁶ And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit