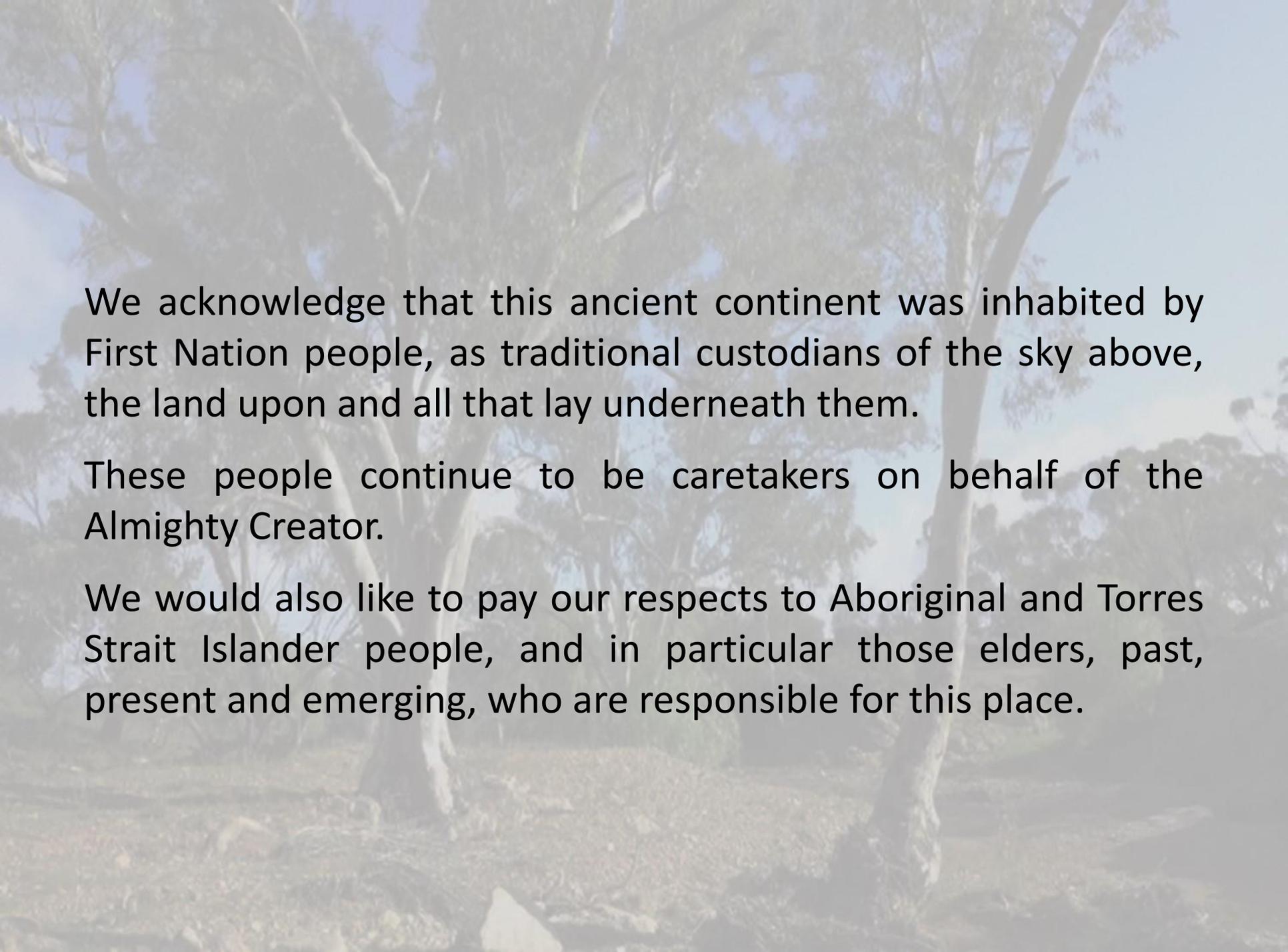


Engage the local environment
through this earth examen ¹

Ministry of EcoSpirituality

Diocese of Willochra

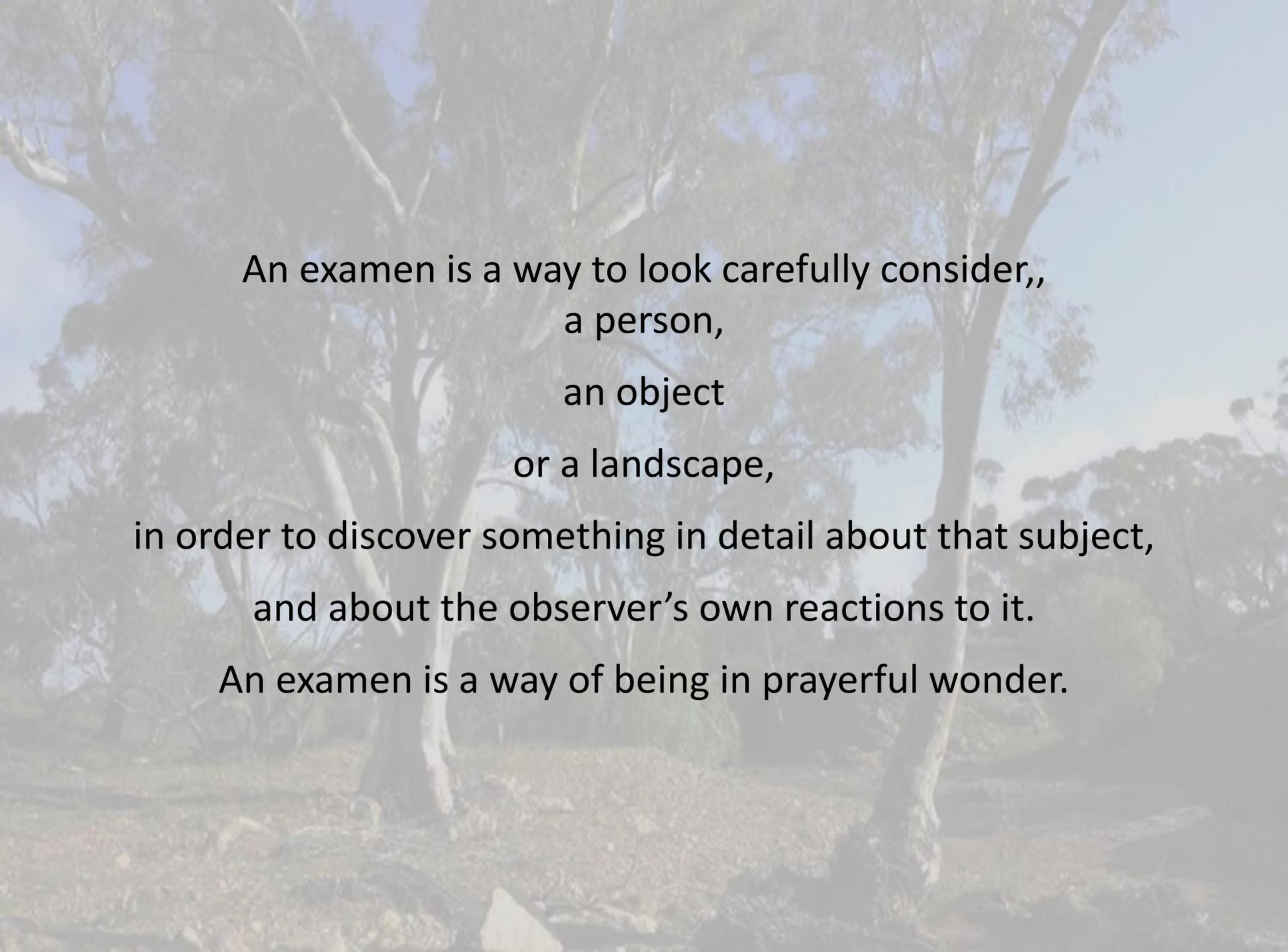
Season of Creation



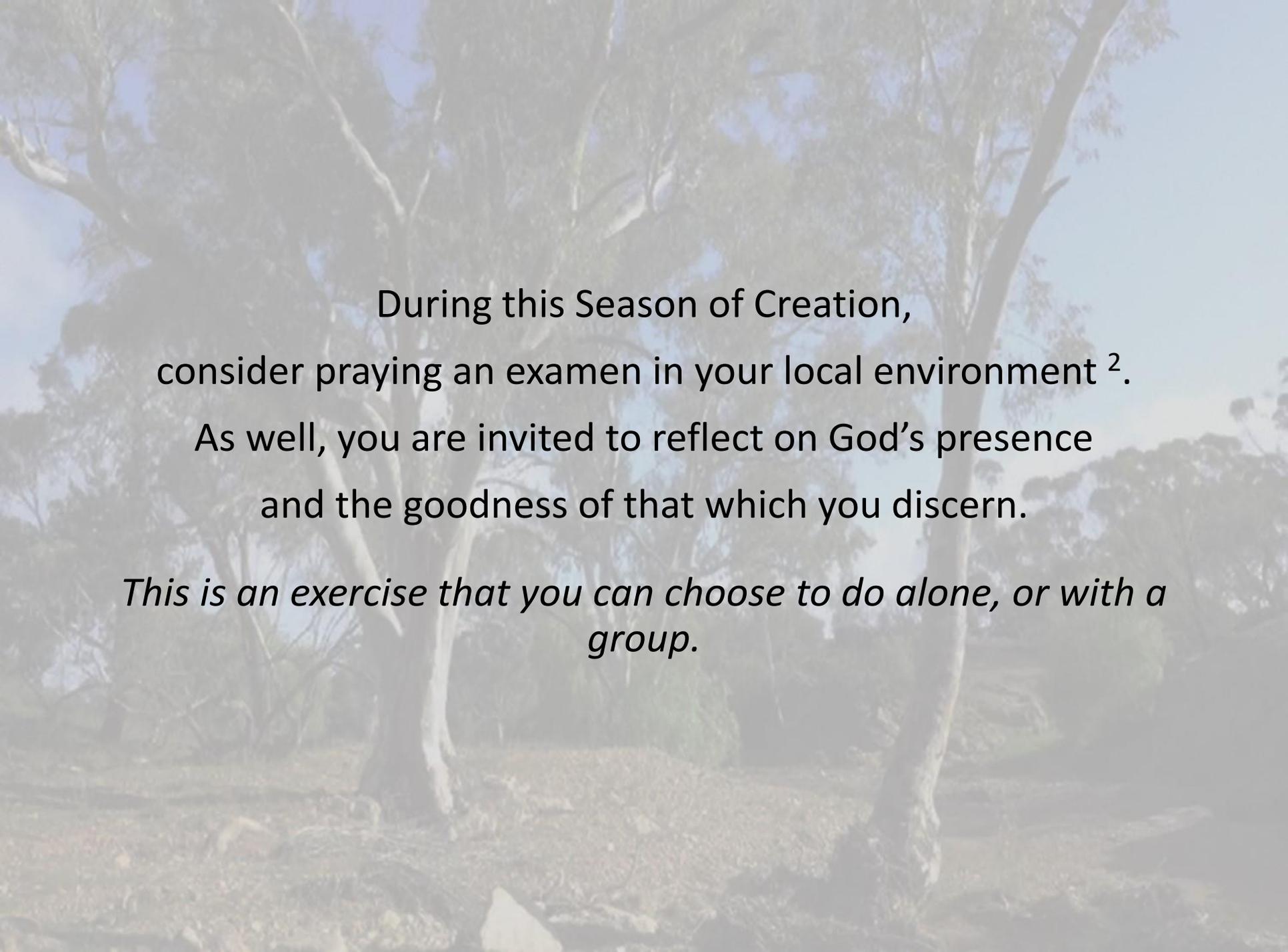
We acknowledge that this ancient continent was inhabited by First Nation people, as traditional custodians of the sky above, the land upon and all that lay underneath them.

These people continue to be caretakers on behalf of the Almighty Creator.

We would also like to pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and in particular those elders, past, present and emerging, who are responsible for this place.



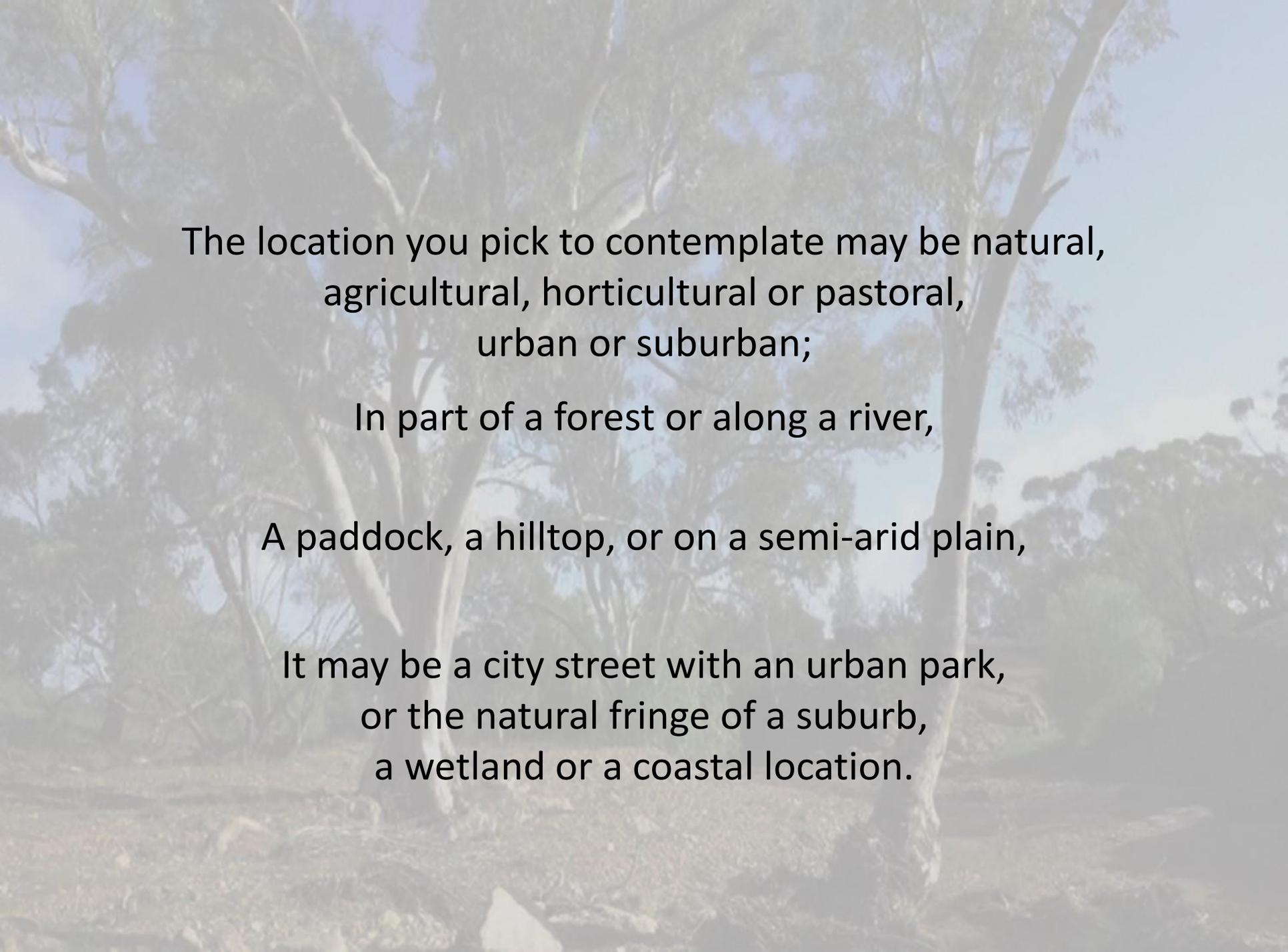
An examen is a way to look carefully consider,,
a person,
an object
or a landscape,
in order to discover something in detail about that subject,
and about the observer's own reactions to it.
An examen is a way of being in prayerful wonder.



During this Season of Creation,
consider praying an examen in your local environment ².

As well, you are invited to reflect on God's presence
and the goodness of that which you discern.

*This is an exercise that you can choose to do alone, or with a
group.*

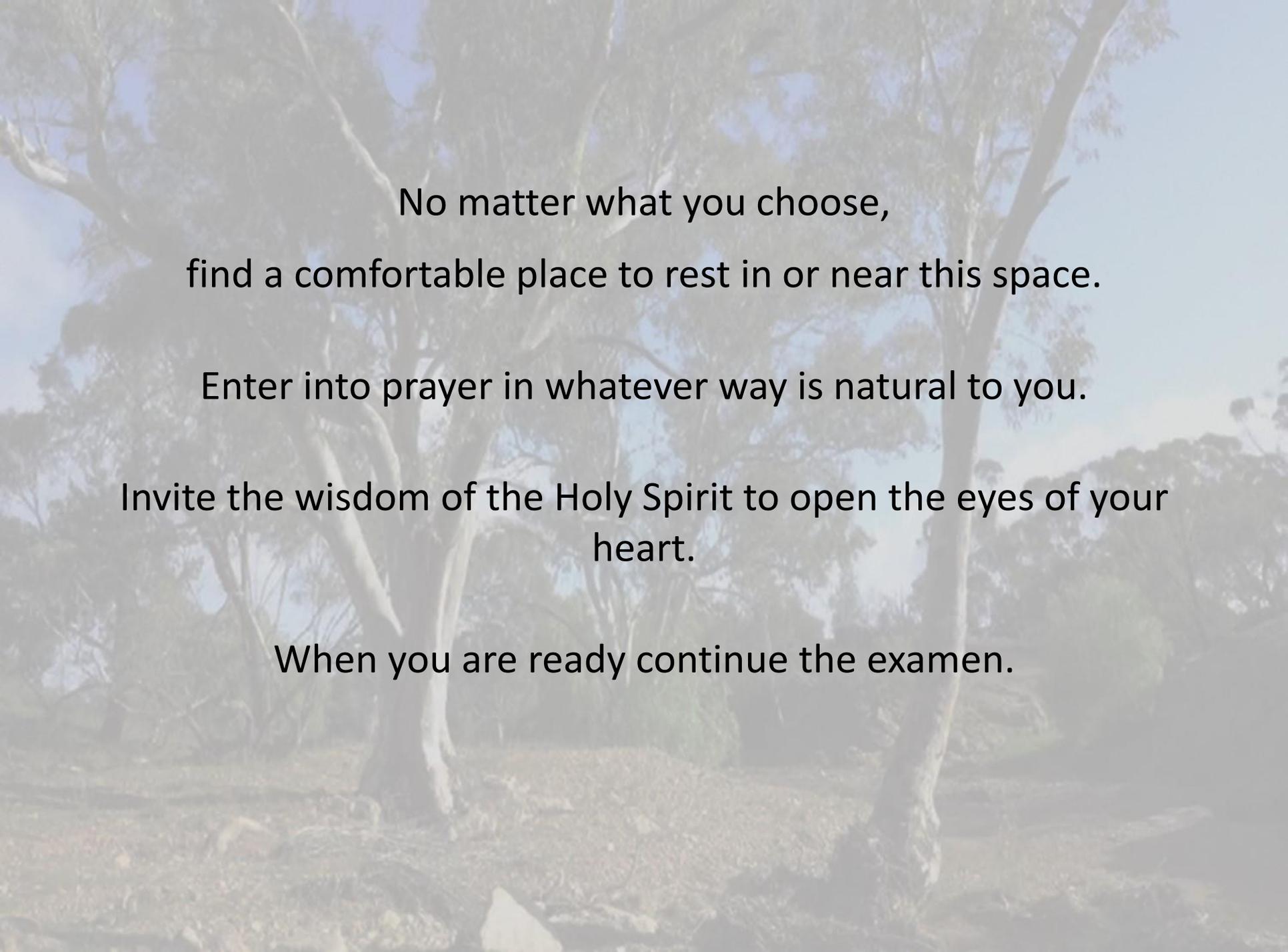


The location you pick to contemplate may be natural,
agricultural, horticultural or pastoral,
urban or suburban;

In part of a forest or along a river,

A paddock, a hilltop, or on a semi-arid plain,

It may be a city street with an urban park,
or the natural fringe of a suburb,
a wetland or a coastal location.

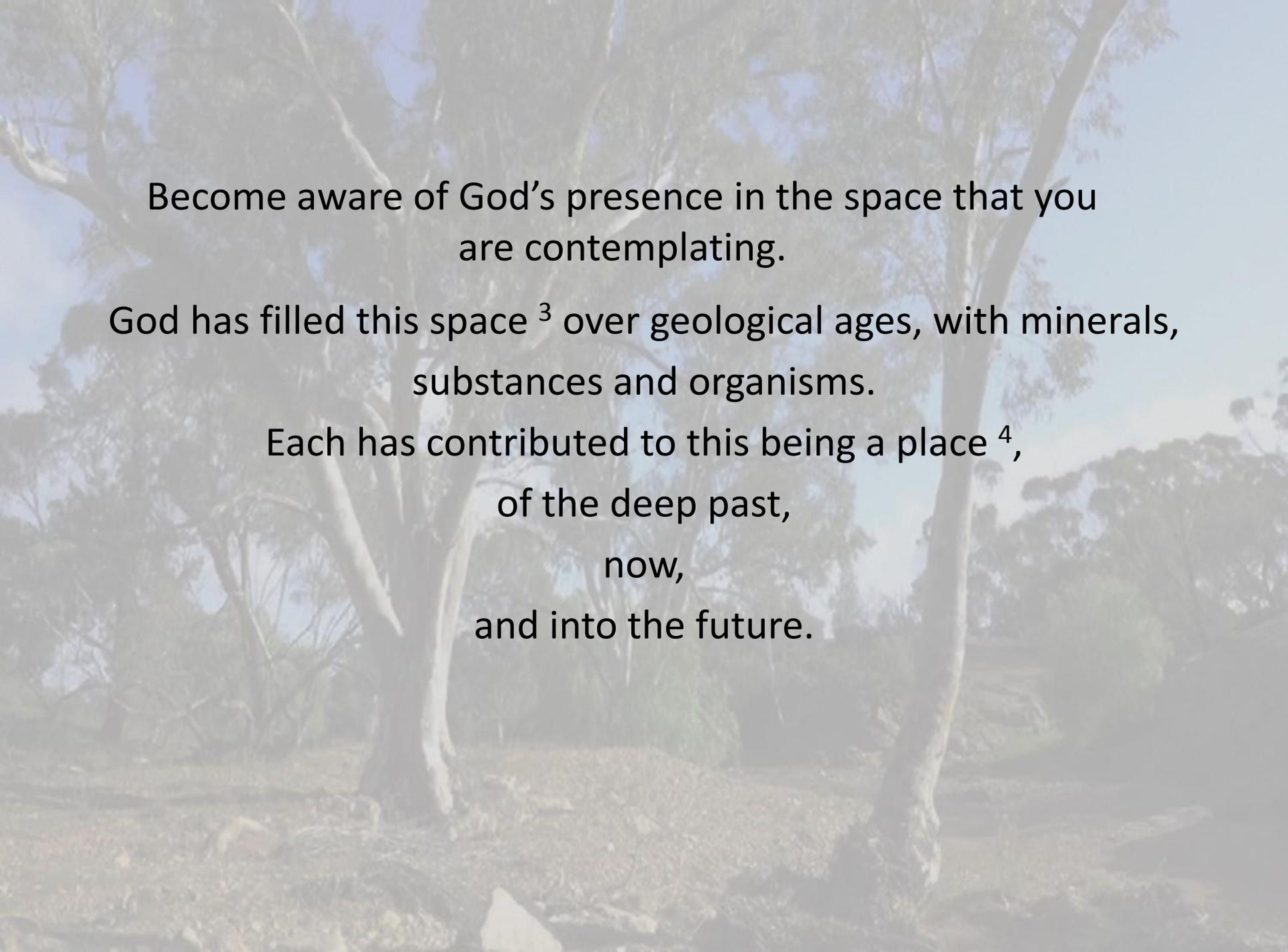


No matter what you choose,
find a comfortable place to rest in or near this space.

Enter into prayer in whatever way is natural to you.

Invite the wisdom of the Holy Spirit to open the eyes of your
heart.

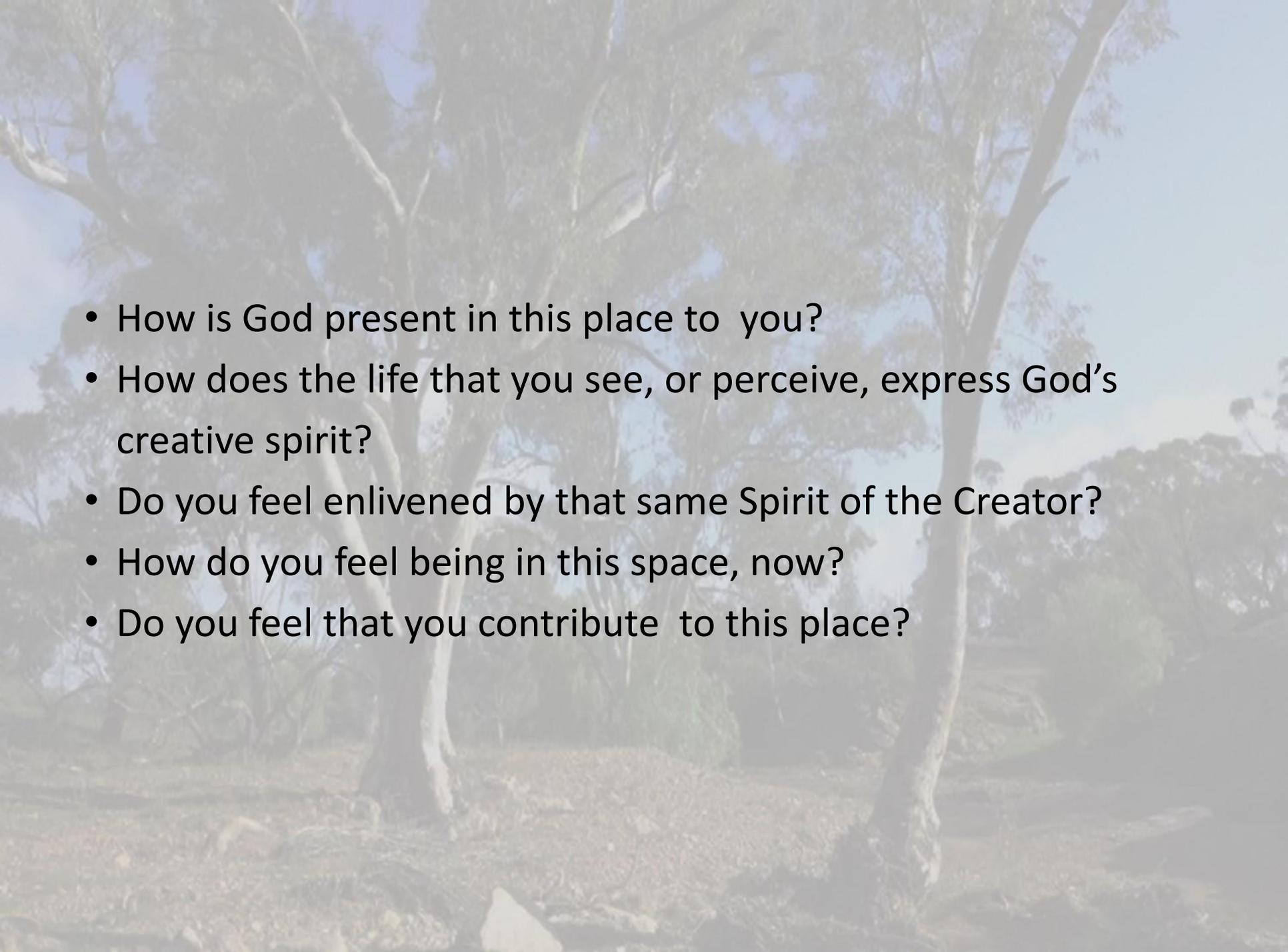
When you are ready continue the examen.



Become aware of God's presence in the space that you
are contemplating.

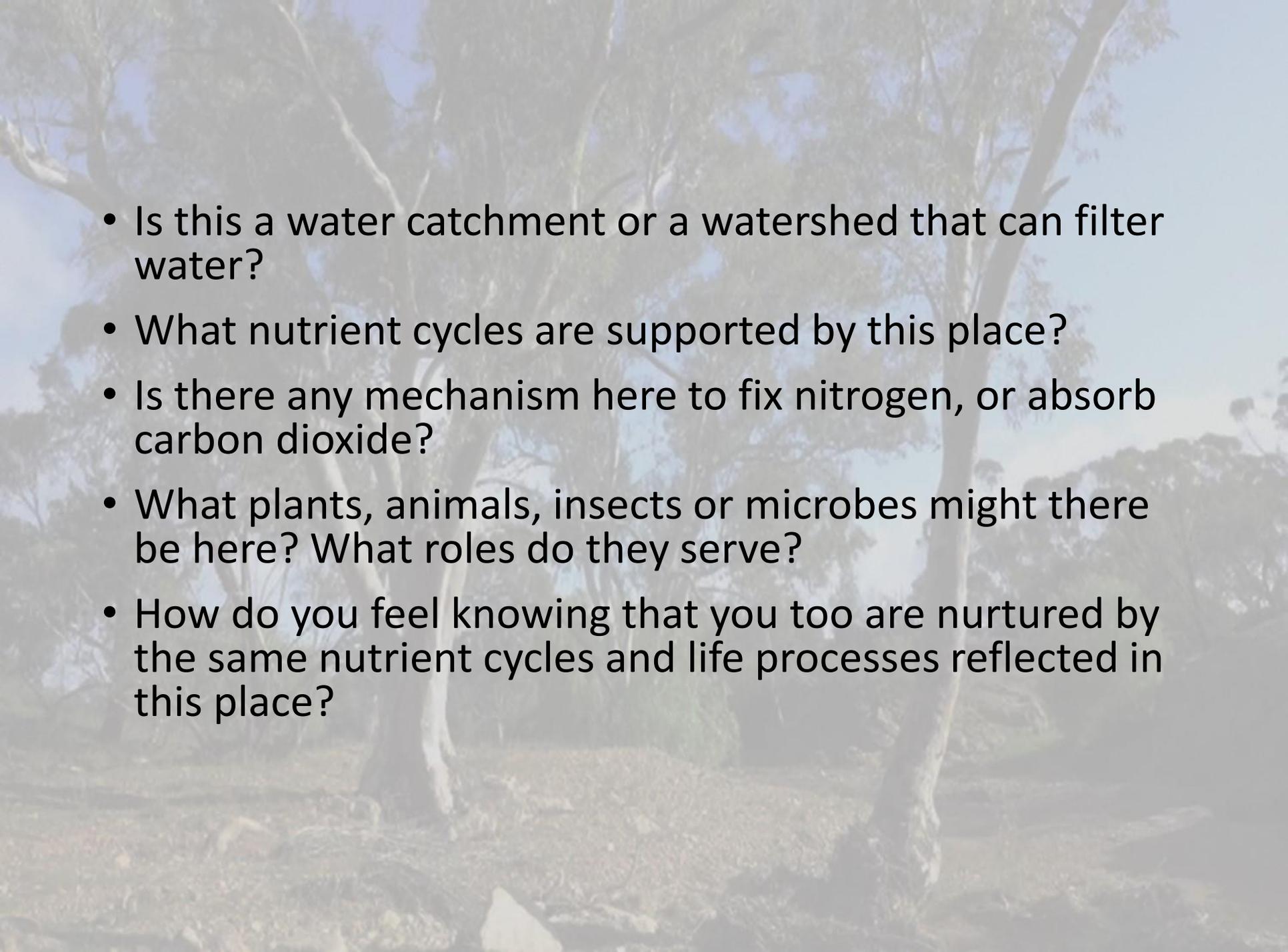
God has filled this space ³ over geological ages, with minerals,
substances and organisms.

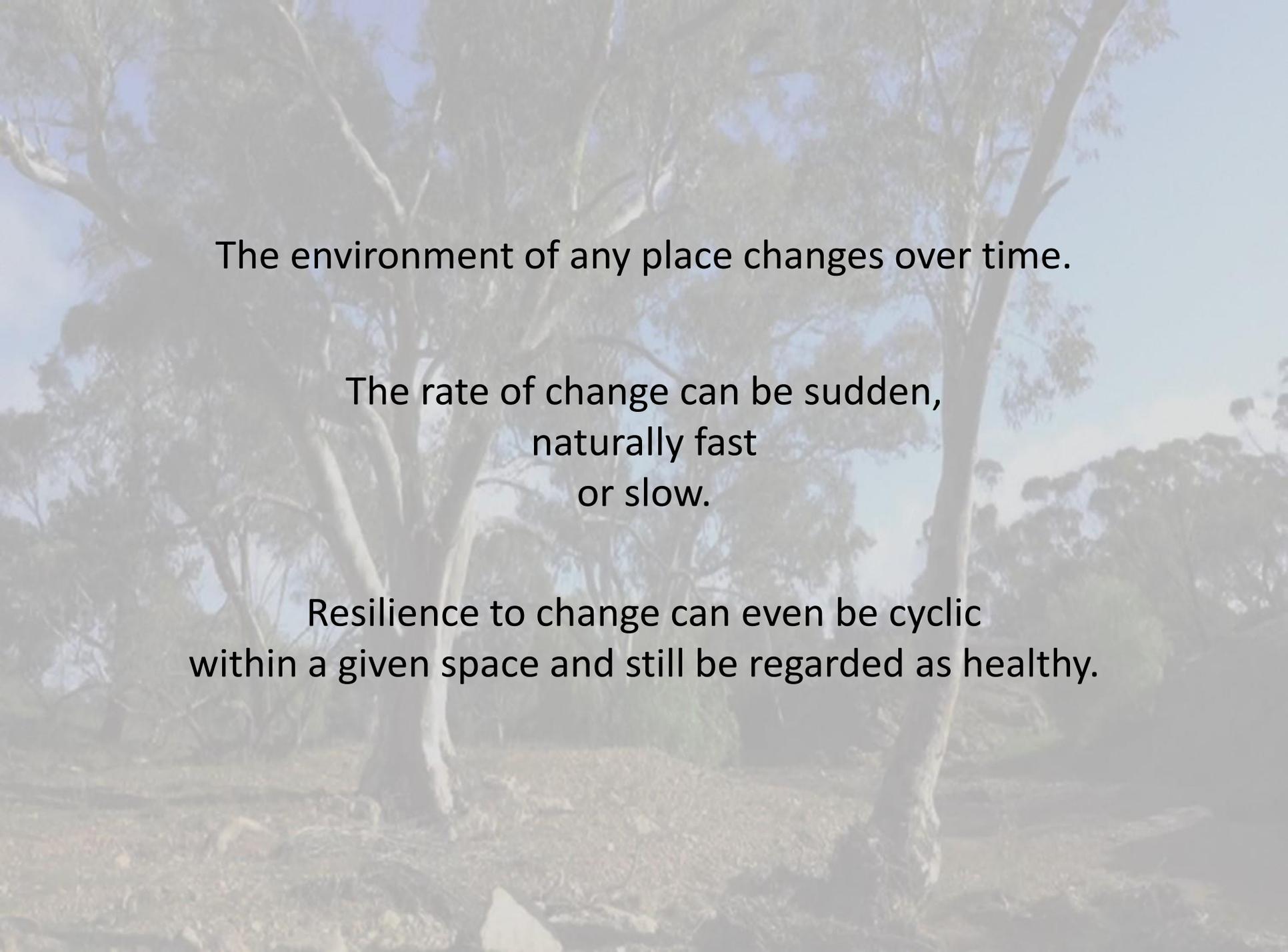
Each has contributed to this being a place ⁴,
of the deep past,
now,
and into the future.

- 
- How is God present in this place to you?
 - How does the life that you see, or perceive, express God's creative spirit?
 - Do you feel enlivened by that same Spirit of the Creator?
 - How do you feel being in this space, now?
 - Do you feel that you contribute to this place?



For some life, this space has been home,
nurtured by nutrient cycles and life processes.
Reflect on the ecological cycles of this place.

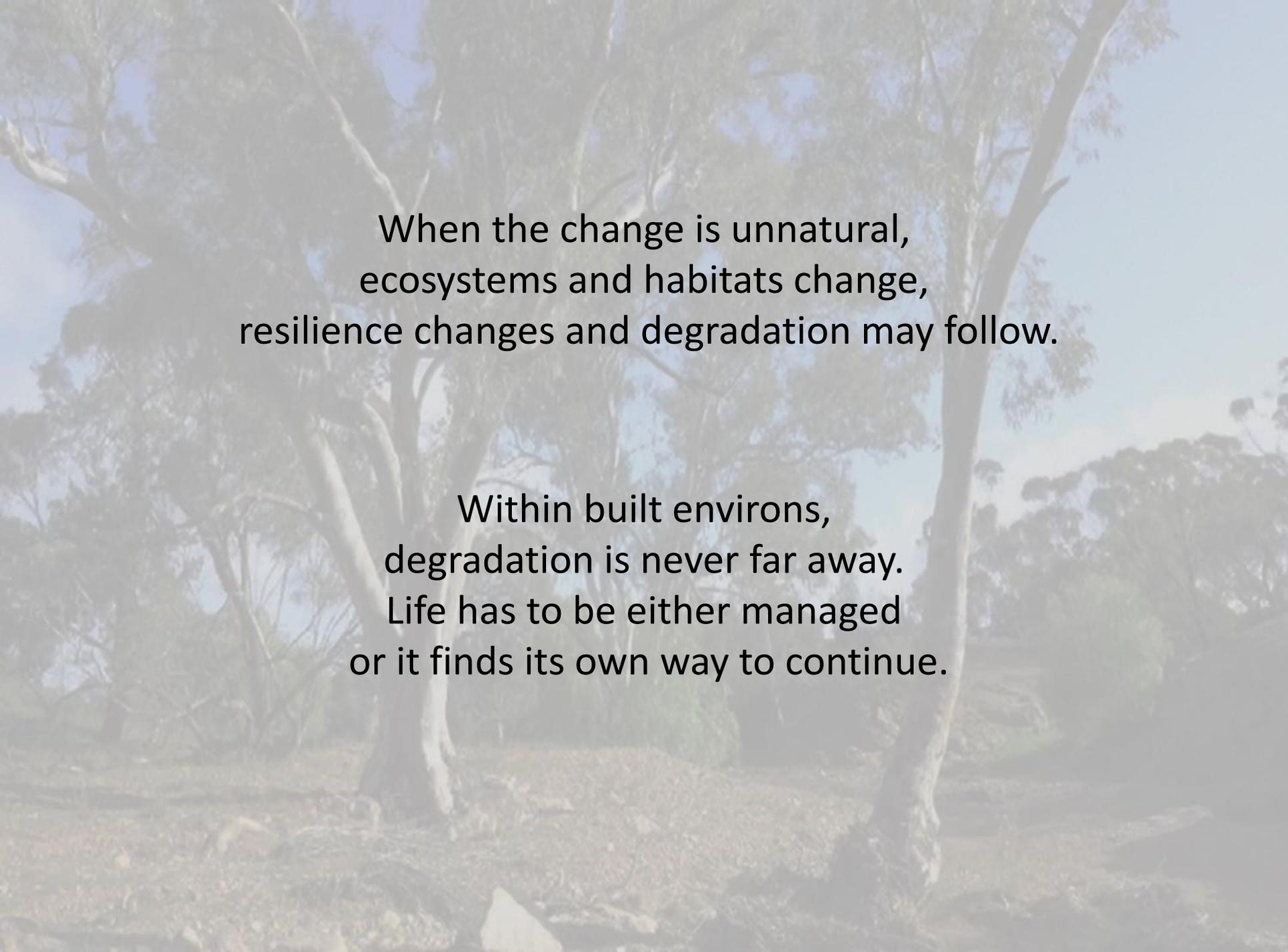
- 
- Is this a water catchment or a watershed that can filter water?
 - What nutrient cycles are supported by this place?
 - Is there any mechanism here to fix nitrogen, or absorb carbon dioxide?
 - What plants, animals, insects or microbes might there be here? What roles do they serve?
 - How do you feel knowing that you too are nurtured by the same nutrient cycles and life processes reflected in this place?



The environment of any place changes over time.

The rate of change can be sudden,
naturally fast
or slow.

Resilience to change can even be cyclic
within a given space and still be regarded as healthy.

The background of the slide is a faded, semi-transparent image of a natural landscape. It shows several trees with light-colored bark and dense green foliage. A path or clearing is visible in the foreground, leading towards the trees. The overall tone is soft and natural, with a light blue sky visible through the canopy.

When the change is unnatural,
ecosystems and habitats change,
resilience changes and degradation may follow.

Within built environs,
degradation is never far away.
Life has to be either managed
or it finds its own way to continue.

Pay attention to what you feel as you contemplate this question.

Is this site a healthy place?

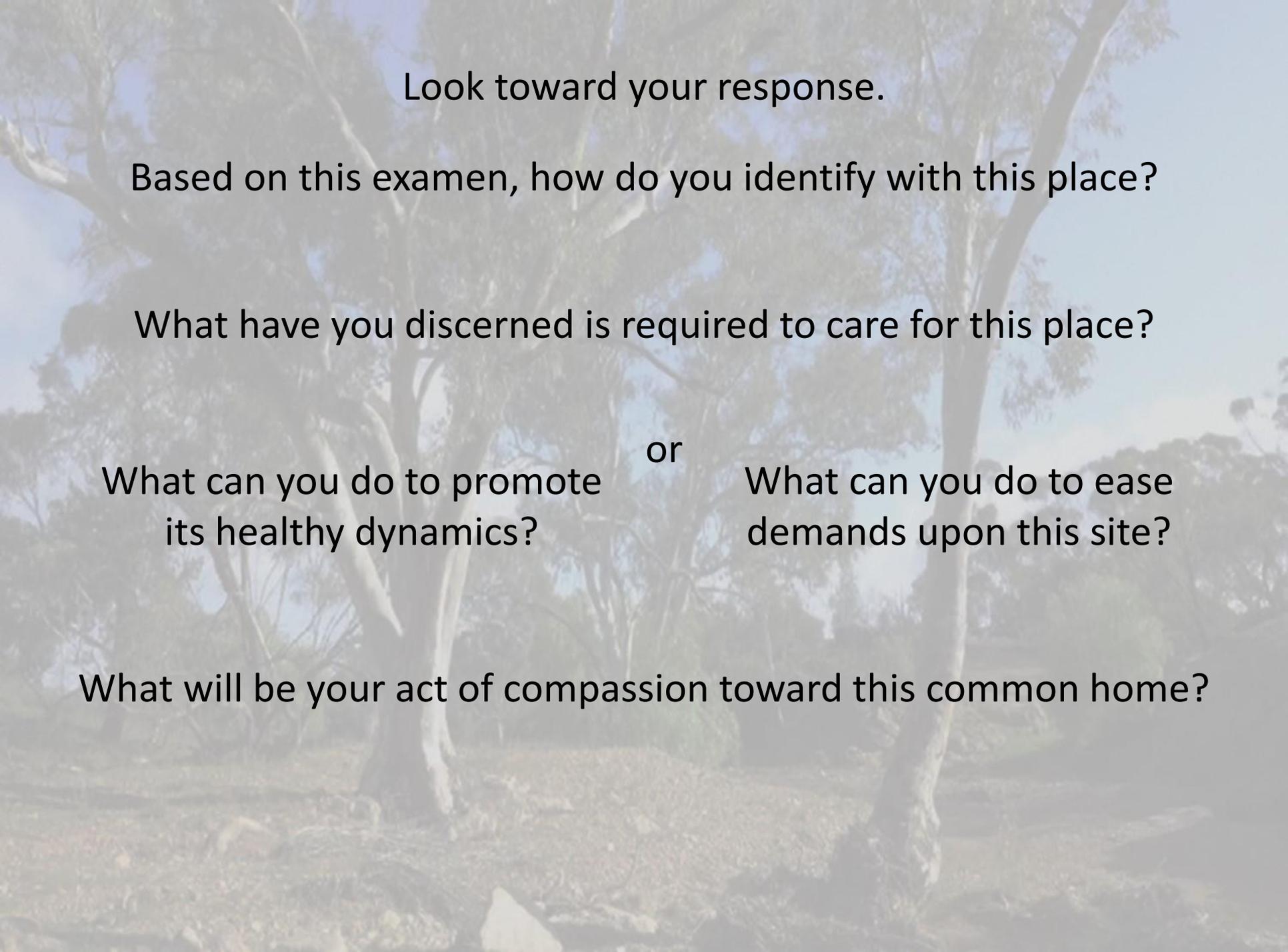
Yes

No

- What are the keys to maintaining the resilience of this place?
- What niches ⁵ and diversity must be protected to maintain the health of habitats here?

- Is this place at risk of degradation?
- What are the sources of stress that threaten the resilience of this particular place?
- Do those stressors drive co-species from this place?

How do you feel about you have discovered?



Look toward your response.

Based on this examen, how do you identify with this place?

What have you discerned is required to care for this place?

What can you do to promote its healthy dynamics? or What can you do to ease demands upon this site?

What will be your act of compassion toward this common home?



Pray for this site,
and for the wisdom
and the positive relationships
needed to care for it.

Acknowledgements and Notes

1. Adapted from Earth Examen, *2021 Celebration Guide: A Home for All? Renewing the Oikos of God*; Appended resource 2 Season of Creation.
2. Other locations beyond your neighbourhood are equally valid.
3. Space is the unlimited or indefinitely great general receptacle of things having three dimensions. In this case, the space we contemplate it is limited only by our perceptive vision.
4. Place is a particular portion of space, of definite or indefinite extent, given identity by function or purpose.
5. Niche is the position or function of an organism in a biological community.