

Prayers for Peace, Hope and Justice

“Eternal God. The one who was in the very beginning, who is now, and who forever will be.

What did you have in mind when you set the planets dancing in a perfect rhythm in space all those years ago? When you hung each star, like tiny lanterns, in the night sky? When you gently wrapped me in darkness to allow time to rest, and to grow, and to be silent? And then turned that night into day in the most exquisite of ways, with splashes of orange, and pink, and purple, and yellow mixed together like no other artist ever could- what did you have in mind?

Creator God, they call me Mother Earth.

Mother. One who gives birth to new life. Who nurtures and cares for, who provides all that is necessary for growth. Who loves abundantly.

Yet I struggle to see how they return my love. Why do they hurt me so? How has their desire for more, and more, and more, overcome their wonder of all I have to offer, of all I have given?

God the Maker, I'm feeling assaulted and abused, so I cry out to you.

Quieten your children. Quieten them to listen to the whisper of the trees, the rustle of the reeds. May they hear their voices...they're talking to them! Composer of the birdsong, may they be attentive to each tune of my winged friends, perhaps even singing something back. Let them hear the soft language of the night, when sometimes your still, small voice is clearest.

Giver of Life, teach them to see- to know that when they stand in awe of the beauty of a sunset: when they feel the soft wash of the waves over their feet; when they gasp at a flash of lightning across the night sky; when they look into the eyes of an animal, then they have seen you. Perhaps that connection will stop the destruction? Maybe it will awaken the awareness of the sacred in everything and all?

Oh God, may they choose the life and peace, your peace, that comes from sitting in stillness under a tree, wading in the cool, clear water of a stream, breathing in the fresh air at the top of a mountain, rather than choosing the death and destruction of decimating my rainforests, dumping waste into my rivers, and spewing toxic fumes into the air they breathe, the very air that gives them life. May the noise I hear in my soul not be that of chainsaws, seismic blasting, fracking, or drilling and mining for fossil fuels, but rather that

of orangutans chattering to each other, of the whales calling across the vastness of the oceans, of the insects scuttling across my surface, of birds singing and soaring in the heavens above. May they find alternative means to live that are friendly to me, that do not hurt me. May they stop fighting with me, stop trying to control me and subdue me, stop exploiting and oppressing me, stop their greedy pursuit of wealth, of convenience. Maybe a letting go of power will create the space to start loving and sharing, allowing for the birth of new life. May they see that they are paying the price of separating themselves from the natural world...from me. And that they can only be saved by realigning themselves with me again, by submerging themselves back into me, by living in communion with me, you and each other. May they see it before it is too late.

Oh God, I need to be held tenderly, gently, kindly, with the care and compassion of you when you put every piece of me together. I'm desperate for your children to live life not in ways that *they* think they need, but in ways that *I* need. Lord, may they fall in love with me again – madly in love. And may they know that by loving me, they are loving you.

My Creator, I do see hope though. Just like the fynbos after a fire, like a daisy or poppy pushing through a crack in the pavement, bringing light to the grey around it; like the blossoms giving colour to the naked branches of winter; like the doves cooing in this sanctuary. Thank you for those of your children who are fighting for my well-being. For those who have chosen to keep the promise of taking care of me. For those who are my voice. For those who grieve with you when I suffer. Continue to make them angry at the unjust systems that enable wealth for a few, while causing poverty for so many others, at my expense. Raise up leaders who have the courage to say no to my ongoing devastation. May they know that you are always ready, always longing, always forgiving of a change of heart. That you cannot wait to embrace a choice of love for me, and for all your children, and to cradle the new life that that will bring in your eternal arms. To pour out your water of living grace over all the world. May your kingdom come on me, Mother Earth, as it is in heaven.

I think that is what you had in mind”.