



COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE, PEACE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION
USG/UISG SECRETARIAT
Via Aurelia 476, 00165, Rome, Italy.
Email: jpicusguisg@lasalle.org / www.jpicformation.wikispaces.com

PRAYER FOR 5TH OF JUNE, 2013: WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

Directions are in italics.

(World Environment Day (WED) was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1972 and first celebrated the following year. This was the first occasion on which the political, social and economic problems of the global environment were discussed at an intergovernmental forum with a view to actually taking corrective action. WED is coordinated by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).)

Speaker 1, Call to prayer: Let us begin with a deep awareness of the divine presence in all creation — including each of us — and a deep awareness of being part of our spinning planet as it speeds around our Sun. Let us ask the Spirit to help us renew the face of the Earth.

Pause to pray, in silence, spontaneously, or with a prayer familiar to the group.

S.2: Mining has become a compelling issue for many religious congregations. Unjust mining practices – of coal, gas, oil, diamonds, platinum, gold, uranium, and other minerals — are causing severe harm to individuals, to other beings, and to life systems of air, water, soil, and climate throughout our world.



S.3: We depend on Earth's crust for many gifts such as our ~~solid foundation, aquifers,~~ farmland, trees, minerals, and metaphors for the divine. . . . Let us be grateful for these gifts.

Together: "Be praised, my Lord, through our sister Mother Earth, who feeds us and rules us, and produces various fruits with colored flowers and herbs." St. Francis of Assisi

S.4: Minerals date to 4 ½ billion years ago when a starburst radiated all the elements now found in our planet. Over millions of years, Earth with its elements coalesced. The early Earth was very hot, and fiery volcanoes spewed molten rock and minerals from its core. Eventually Earth formed a rigid crust above the core. Under the crust, constant churning altered, mixed, and multiplied the minerals, many of which are lodged in the crust. As the continents moved, plants and animals in sediments were buried in Earth's depths. Over time these became crude oil and gas.

S.5: Let us review some facts about mining and respond after each one with a moment of silent reflection:

Beginning with the Spanish conquistadores, Latin American became "an open vein" causing excessive human toil, suffering, and environmental destruction. This suffering and destruction continues today because of unjust mining practices. *Silent reflection.*

S.6: Diamonds were discovered in South Africa in 1867. The resulting policies and events had an increasingly negative impact on justice and race relations in South Africa and formed the basis of the apartheid system that dominated South Africa for a century. Silent reflection.

S.7: Today London is the mining capital of the world. British-based mining companies deliver two-thirds of global iron ore output, most of the world's diamonds, platinum and titanium, and a significant proportion of other metals and minerals. Mining companies have removed farming communities from their lands in Colombia and South Africa, and they have failed to gain the indigenous peoples' permission to operate on their land in the Philippines. Silent reflection.

S.8: Some minerals are mined by children in conditions of armed conflict and human rights abuses. In the eastern provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, millions of people have been killed, women are raped, villages are raided, people are displaced, land is ruined, and the gorilla population is threatened with extinction. Silent reflection.



S.9: To save the planet as we know it we must avoid an increase of 2 degrees Celsius in Earth's atmosphere. We can burn no more than 565 billion tons of carbon-based fuel. But there are five times that many (2,795) already in reserve, and the oil, coal, and natural gas industries are looking for more. Silent reflection.

S.10: Mining operations are encountering resistance from both people and governments from Haiti to Bolivia to Peru. Global groups organize prayers, protests, letter-writing campaigns, and divestment activities to stop unjust and damaging mining practices. Silent reflection.

If the group is small, share together. If it is larger, share in 2's or 3's — thoughts and feelings, hopes and fears on any one of the following. Clarify what signal will be used to end the discussion.

- The mining issue that most concerns me is . . . because

- My awareness that mining issues affect poverty, human dignity, and future generations was heightened when . . . because
- Concerning mining, I am inspired when I learn . . . because

End discussion and respond together: **“The environment is God's gift to everyone, and in our use of it we have a responsibility towards the poor, towards future generations and towards humanity as a whole.”** Pope Benedict XVI, 2009

S.11: Centuries ago, Galileo Galilei wrote: "What greater stupidity can be imagined than that of calling jewels, silver, and gold "precious," and earth and soil "base"? People who do this ought to remember that if there were as great a scarcity of soil as of jewels or precious metals there would not be a prince who would not spend a bushel of diamonds and rubies and a cartload of jewels just to have enough earth to plant a jasmine in a little pot, or to sow an orange seed and watch it sprout, grow, and produce its handsome leaves, its fragrant flowers, and fine fruit."

Respond together: Bless the Lord, O my soul! O God, you are great! ... You are clothed with justice and mercy . . . You set the earth on its foundations, strong and secure ... At your word the mountains rose, the valleys became low in the places you did appoint. You brought harmony to all the earth. Excerpts from Psalm 104

LITANY: Depending on size and proximity of group, decide who will read intentions. Please reply: We humbly ask empowerment.

- Let us pray that humanity may shift from an entirely human-centered view of our existence to a realization that Earth is a communion of subjects, a oneness of which we are all a part, we humbly ask empowerment.
- that our efforts and those of others will eliminate or reduce the effects of current harmful mining practices, we humbly ask empowerment.
- that our efforts and those of others will establish a more equal distribution of the benefits of mining, we humbly ask empowerment.
- that our efforts and those of others will bring positive advancement to residents where resources are located, and will increase their participation in decision-making about their sacred land, we humbly ask empowerment.
- that our efforts and those of others will find ways for mining companies and their shareholders to benefit from sustainable development, we humbly ask empowerment.
- that our efforts and those of others will result in companies and governments respecting the limitations of natural resources and conserving the environment, we humbly ask empowerment.
- that our efforts and those of others will protect the needs of future generations, we humbly ask empowerment.

- that those whose hearts are "crusted" by greed and thoughtlessness will mine the treasures of love within, we humbly ask empowerment.

Final Speaker: Let us reflect quietly on what we can do to heal Earth from damaging mining practices. Pause to reflect. Optional background music.

You are now invited to write on your paper what you will do this week to alleviate the negative aspects of the mining situation that most concerns you. (For example: ask government officials for better legislation; ask companies that need minerals (like Apple) to police their supply chains; lobby for development of acceptable substitutes; recycle electronics; transition to renewable energy; divest from investments in fossil fuels and companies that allow human rights abuses.) Allow time for writing.



As you finish, place your paper in the empty dish. When everyone's paper is in the dish, someone uses soil from the second dish to bury these promised efforts, the result of which will be "mined" by future generations. Remain standing, forming a circle around the dish for the closing prayer.

All: You have blessed us with good things and plenty; you have surrounded our table with joy. May we here present, and those we bring in our hearts, soon experience an improvement: in the working conditions of those who mine; in the care of our atmosphere, land, and water; and in humankind's reverence for your gift to us of our unique home — Earth — for which we thank you in Jesus' name. Amen.

If practical, someone takes the dish containing the group's promises (in procession? with music? drumming? dancing?) and buries the promises. Or, plant something in the dish.