

Our Earth Prayer

Our experience at the United Nations for the 60th Annual DPI/NGO Conference began with two days of preparation. During these days we learned about the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which express what governments of the world have committed themselves to. We also learned about the Earth Charter, which is a parallel document prepared by the peoples of Earth, expressing what we, the people, will do.

Adapted from the Earth Charter document, we have prepared the following prayer to offer to RSCJ worldwide in preparation for Chapter 2008. For further reflection on how this relates to the themes of Chapter 2008 for the Society of the Sacred Heart - spirituality and governance - please see the Constitutions paragraphs 17-29, 139-143, 179-181.*

We invite every RSCJ individual and community to make this prayer your own as we pray together:

We, Religious of the Sacred Heart, stand at a critical moment in Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future. As the world becomes increasingly interdependent and fragile, the future at once holds great peril and great promise. To move forward we recognize that in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms we are one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny. We join together to bring forth a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace. Towards this end, we, Religious of the Sacred Heart, declare our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life, and to future generations.

To realize these aspirations, as Religious of the Sacred Heart we seek to live with a sense of universal responsibility, identifying ourselves with the whole Earth community as well as our local communities. We are at once citizens of different nations and of one world in which the local and global are linked. The spirit of human solidarity and kinship with all life is strengthened when we live with reverence for the mystery of being, gratitude for the gift of life, and humility regarding the human place in nature.

As never before in history, common destiny beckons us to seek a new beginning. This requires a change of mind and heart. It requires a new sense of global interdependence and universal responsibility. We must imaginatively develop and apply the vision of a sustainable way of life locally, nationally, regionally, and globally. Our cultural diversity is a precious heritage and different cultures will find their own distinctive ways to realize the vision.

Life often involves tensions between important values. This can mean difficult choices. However, we must find ways to harmonize diversity with unity, the exercise of freedom with the common good, short-term objectives with long-term goals. Every individual, family, organization, and community has a vital role to play.

Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life.

*This prayer was condensed and adapted
from the full text of the Earth Charter,
in particular the "Preamble" and "The Way Forward"*
www.earthcharter.org

* The Earth Charter has been translated in more than 30 languages, including German, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Kiswahili, Korean, Portuguese, etc. (see list of languages at www.earthcharterinaction.org/read_charter.html). If your language is among the 30 listed, you may like to put this prayer into your own language.