



## VIA POSITIVA 2024 SEEDS OF CELEBRATION

### **Via Positiva – The Path of Awe**

In the awe, wonder, beauty, joy, blessing and mystery of nature and all beings, each of whom is as Hildegard of Bingen put it a “word of God,” a “mirror of God that glistens and glitters.”

*Love all God’s creation, the whole and every grain of sand in it. Love every leaf, every ray of God’s light. Love the animals, love the plants, love everything. If you love everything, you will perceive the divine mystery in things...when you are left alone, pray. Love to throw yourself on the earth and kiss it. Kiss the earth and love it with an unceasing, consuming love.*

-Fyodor Dostoevsky, The Karamazov Brothers

### **First Half: June 23 – August 4**

#### **Earth, Our Original Monastery**

Consider Earth as our original monastery. Earth is the place where learn our most fundamental prayers, hear the call of the wild arising at dawn that wakens us to a new day, participate in the primal liturgy of celebration unfolding all around us, and experience the wisdom and guidance of the seasons. This seven-week series is an invitation to find solace and spiritual revelation in the wonder of God’s creation.

June 23, 2024

#### **Earth as the Original Cathedral**

*By means of all created things, without exception, the divine assails us, penetrates us, and moulds us. We imagined it as distant and inaccessible, whereas in fact we live steeped in its burning layers. . . The world, this palpable world, which we were wont to treat with the boredom and disrespect with which we habitually regard places with no sacred association for us, is in truth a holy place, and we did not know it.*

-Teilhard de Chardin

June 30, 2024

#### **Earth as the Original Angels and Saints**

The poet David Whyte has a beautiful line in his poem “What to Remember When Waking” where he asks, “Why are we the one terrible part of creation privileged to refuse our own flowering?” He is calling us to awareness, imagine that everything created was formed with this natural impulse or instinct toward its own flowering into fullness. Why do we, as human beings, work so hard to resist our calling?

July 7, 2024

### **Earth as the Original Sacred Texts**

*Believe me, you will find more lessons in the woods than in books. Trees and stones will teach you what you cannot learn from masters.*

-St Bernard of Clairvaux

The Celtic Christian tradition maintains that we receive two books of revelation. One is the book of the sacred texts, and the other is the vast book of creation. We need both to receive the fullness of divine wisdom. How might paying attention to the rhythm of the days and the seasons offer you wisdom about how to move more gently through your life? What graces does an honoring of dusk and night, as well as autumn and winter, offer when lived into as a balance to our spring-and-summer culture?

July 14, 2024

### **Earth as the Original Spiritual Directors**

*I was sad one day and went for a walk; I sat in a field. A rabbit noticed my condition and came near. It often does not take more than that to help at times – to just be close to creatures who are so full of knowing, so full of love, that they don't chat, they just gaze with their marvelous understanding*

-St. John of the Cross, "A Rabbit Noticed My Condition"

July 21,

### **Earth as the Original Icon**

*Immediately, the eyes of my soul were opened, and in a vision I saw God's wholeness and the wholeness of creation. In the sea, and also in everything beyond the sea in outer space, I saw nothing but God's presence. It was totally indescribable, my soul was overcome with wonder at everything.*

-Angela of Foligno, thirteenth-century mystic

Nature is a holy text for many of us and an icon is a window to the divine presence at work in the world. Creation is therefore the original icon, the primordial place of our encounter with God, the great artist who is continually at work in the world around us.

July 28, 2024

### **Earth as the Original Sacrament**

*I once spoke to my friend, an old squirrel, about the sacraments – he got so excited and ran into a hollow in his tree and came back holding some acorns, an owl feather, and a ribbon he had found. And I just smiled and yes, "Yes, dear, you understand: everything imparts God's grace."*

-St Francis of Assisi

Sacramentality extends beyond the formal sacraments such as baptism, matrimony and communion and extends our vision out to the world so that everything can be a sacrament, meaning every person, creature, plant, and object can be an opportunity to encounter something of the divine presence in the world.

August 4, 2024

**Earth as the Original Liturgy/Celebration**

*Religion has always kept earth time. Liturgy only gives sanction to what the heart already knows.*

-Phyllis Tickle

There is a *hidden wholeness* in creation that is present to us if we only have eyes to see the greening power alive in the world. Our presence as contemplatives in the world, seeking to overcome dualism and divisions, longing to see the wholeness that is already present within us and in the world around us – is the work of healing the world. It is because we have cultivated our capacity to see that we live into a way of being that is free from anxiety and bears witness to an alternative. Liturgy celebrates the wholeness that is already in our midst.