

The "Great Litany" of Creation  
by the Rev. M. L. Hildebrandt

*The Great Litany has been part of the Book of Common Prayer since the first edition in 1549. It was historically read after Morning Prayer (Sundays, Wednesdays, Fridays), and in more recent times is generally used during Lent and Rogation Days. This "Great Litany of Creation" is intended to be used at any appropriate service, especially any and all Sunday services during the Season of Creation. It is written from a White, privileged perspective, as this is both the author's context and the context of the majority of clergy and people in the Episcopal Church. It reflects the sins of the White-bodied supremacy culture that we all live in and many of us in this Church have benefitted from, even as this same culture leads us into climate and environmental chaos. For BIPOC people and communities, please change the language and perspective as appropriate to your context.*

God the Creator of all, **Have mercy upon us.**

God the Incarnate Word, present in Creation from the beginning, **have mercy on us.**

God the Spirit of truth and forgiveness, **have mercy on us.**

Holy Trinity, divine community, **have mercy on us.**

We come before you in this time of deepening social and climate crisis to confess our complicity and inaction, to pray for those most severely affected, and to ask for the courage and perseverance to be diligent in prayer, in seeking truth, in allowing ourselves to be transformed, and in acting with Spirit-led wisdom for the good of our human and non-human siblings.

**Hear us, gracious God.**

We confess that we have not valued your air, which sustains every breath, and have instead polluted it with toxic chemicals and waste products, especially concentrated where Black and brown bodies live. We have filled the air with extra carbon, which is causing catastrophic climate changes and global heating.

**Have mercy on us, merciful God.**

We confess that we have wasted and polluted water, the drink of life and main substance in our bodies. We have discharged heavy metals into the seas and rivers, choked them with fertilizer and manure run-off, clogged the oceans with plastic, and poisoned our most vulnerable children with industrial chemicals and lead-filled water from old pipes.

**Have mercy on us, merciful God.**

We confess that we have abused the soil, the Earth mother who teems with life and provides food for all land creatures. We have squandered her, allowing her to blow away, killing her vitality with chemical pesticides and fertilizers, depleting her by overuse and greed. We have abandoned and buried toxic and radioactive waste in her; we have stolen her from indigenous people who loved and tended her with care.

**Have mercy on us, merciful God.**

We confess that we have scorned and devalued the simplest organisms—bacteria, algae, and fungi—without which we could not live, and the myriads of insects, worms, and spiders that pollinate our food, aerate our soil, and recycle dead organisms into rich soil. Instead, we have responded with loathing, drugs and chemicals to kill them off. **Have mercy on us, merciful God.**

We confess that we have turned your diverse, interconnected Eden into sterile monocrops of bioengineered food items and grass lawns. We have ravaged the forests for cheap paper and wood, and leveled rainforests to grow meat cattle. **Have. . .**

We confess that we have slaughtered large animals for economic gain, out of fear, and for sport or hatred of those who depend on them—wolves, whales, bison, bears—and have slaughtered or poisoned small mammals and rodents when they seem bothersome or inconvenient—skunks, mice, rats, squirrels, moles.

We confess that we have caused the deaths of many millions of birds, reptiles, amphibians and water creatures and wiped out countless species, due to loss of habitat and food, overfishing, and pollution.

We confess that we instead of cherishing and learning from the indigenous peoples who have lived in harmony to Creation, we have systematically worked to destroy them, their cultures and knowledge and to claim the land they lived from as our own. We continue to allow this destruction of lands, waters, and sovereignty on native lands.

We confess that we have dominated, enslaved and exploited the bodies, land, and resources of our human siblings in this country and around the world for economic gain, especially those of Black of brown bodies, despoiling their lives and leaving behind poverty and environmental disaster for our cheap crops and goods. We continue to allow this even in our local communities.

We confess that we have not loved our own God-given bodies, believing ourselves to be separate from the created order, looking for ease and comfort instead of rigorous use, looking to satisfy our hungers with possessions instead of relationship to your perfect world and busyness instead of attunement to the rhythms of Creation.

Free us from the gods of greed, wealth, and private property and the heresy of believing that what we own is ours to use or abuse and not yours, to respect, share and give away for the benefit and blessing of all.

**Gracious God, deliver us.**

Free us from the idols of comfort and ease, of speed and productivity that lead us to violate relationships and ignore the needs and well-being of our own and other's bodies.

**Gracious God, deliver us.**

Free us from our inability to face the truth and give us the grace to grieve together for what we have lost and despoiled. **Gracious God, deliver us.**

Free us from despair and paralyzing fear, and the privilege of caring only about our own well-being while others suffer.

Free us from the lie that we are separate from our human and non-human siblings; lead us into deep and reciprocal relationships so that we know viscerally that we are one with all life.

For those most directly affected by rising temperatures, rising seas, adverse weather events, drought and climate migration, we pray, especially those you now name . . .

**Hear us, O God of life.**

For species at risk of extinction, including our own, especially those you now name . . .

**Hear us, O God of life.**

For frontline communities, most heavily impacted by environmental injustice and climate crises, for the many organizers, leaders and people standing up for justice, health and equity, we pray, especially those you now name. . .

**Hear us, O God of life.**

That we may have a renewed and restored relationship to all of Creation, we pray,

**Hear us, O God of life.**

That we may persevere in prayer, in spiritual discipline and grounding; that we may cling to the hope of resurrection in the face of evil and death and hold up one another in that hope,

That we may be filled with the courage to change and the commitment to act, being willing to use whatever skills, resources, and energy we have to do this life-giving work.

That we may have the strength to build community and the humility to learn to rely on one another, especially listening to the young, the poor, and those who have historically been silenced,

That we may become mighty leaders in our own local communities, and mighty advocates for generations yet unborn,

For . . . . .

Child of God, we ask you to hear us.

**Child of God, we ask you to hear us.**

Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

**Have mercy on us.**

Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,  
**Have mercy on us.**

Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.  
**Grant us peace.**