

Children of earth we were meant for communion, joined one to all in a holy design. Bound by the thread that is life all renewing, weaving the Love of the Weaver Divine. So turn now from fear and from force and from fighting. Let every stranger be met as a friend.

Turn to the task that is now set before us,
wrongs to make right and the broken to mend.

In his reflection from Genesis 6:5-22: 'Make yourself an ark of Cypress wood,' Rev. Quinn Caldwell wrote in 'Ark': 'Noah's ark scares me. It all just seems so precarious, you know? All the life on earth, every bit of viable DNA that still exists, is floating there, just one well-placed hoof-kick through a bulkhead or one escaped ember in the hay away from the end of all life forever. And only Noah and his family trying to keep it all going and alive. Which isn't so different from the situation on this planet. Just one planet, only one, equipped by God for sustaining life as it floats a lonely path across the face of the void. Like the ark, carrying all the viable DNA in the solar system, maybe all the DNA in the whole galaxy, maybe all that there is in the entire universe. Precarious. I believe that from time to time, God calls new Noahs to tell the rest of the family how to care for our ark, what to do to keep the life here safe and thriving. Among them: John James Audubon, John Muir, Aldo Leopold, Chico Mendes, Wendell Berry. Tomorrow is the birthday of another: Rachael Carson. I plan to celebrate it as a kind of ecological saint's day, reminding myself what she taught us and praying to live accordingly. Why not spend today learning about these new Noahs and what God sent them to do for the ark? Why not spend today praying to see whether you might be the next one? (God is Still Speaking: 365 Daily Devotionals, April 13, p. 111)

The Standing Rock Sioux Nation is currently one of the new Noah's that the Lord has sent to right human wrongs that humans are doing to the Weavers tapestry of her beloved earth. Since 2014 these indigenous peoples have been actively opposing the construction of an oil pipeline intended to cross the Missouri River adjacent to their land. Joined first by Native American tribes from across the country, and more recently by

others including military veterans and clergy; the "water protectors" scored a major victory in December when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers denied permits for the construction of the river crossing and began examining the environmental impact of alternative routes.

At ceremonial gatherings, 'faith leaders spoke words of solidarity with the people of Standing Rock, pledging support and political action. "From the Muslim tradition, one of our most important passages is standing up for justice, even if it's against your mother or father or against yourself," said Sahar Alsahlani from the organization Green Faith and the interfaith Fellowship of Reconciliation. "I'm from Iraq, from the marshlands, and I've seen what the quest for oil and gasoline can do to an Indigenous community. I saw a replication of that happening here and definitely had to say something, because I cannot stand by and see another catastrophe happen."

Kelly Sherman-Conroy, a Luther Seminary student and member of the Oglala Lakota nation, joined dozens of seminarians at the protest. She said her solidarity came from her upbringing, when she learned the importance of God's creation. "We were able to integrate both our Sioux and Christian traditions together," she said of these stewardship lessons. "My grandfather said we always need to be a voice for those who can't speak. That's why I'm here; to stand beside Standing Rock and to support the voice Indigenous people have struggled to have."

Vanessa has been at Standing Rock since August to "protect Mother Earth and the water we all live off of." Pointing to the officers stationed at the top of Turtle Hill, she said: "We're going to do what it takes to protect this water. As they say in the camp, *mni wiconi*, water is life. We all need it. Our children need it. Our children's children need it. And their children need it". (from Sojourners, Feb. 2017)

Prayer. Weaver of infinite tapestry, give us a task to right the wrongs we do to your good creation. May we be seen as Noah in your eyes. Amen.

The Doctrine of Discovery: Why it still Matters Today



Many Americans grow up learning that this continent was “discovered” by Christopher Columbus. The concept of discovery, as if the land was empty prior to arrival and its indigenous inhabitants were somehow “less than” the explorers is, at its heart, racism and cultural superiority.

The doctrine of discovery, a concept of public international law expounded by the United States Supreme Court in a series of decisions, originated from various church documents in Christian Europe in the mid-1400’s to justify the pattern of domination and oppression by European monarchies as they invasively arrived in the Western Hemisphere. It theologically asserted the right to claim the indigenous lands, territories, and resources on behalf of Christendom, and to subjugate native peoples around the world.

In 1823 U.S. Supreme Court case of *Johnson v. M’Intosh*, Chief Justice John Marshall used the doctrine to assert that the United States, as the successor of Great Britain, had inherited authority over all lands within our claimed boundaries. This decision allowed our government to legally ignore or invalidate any native claims to property. To this day courts continue to cite this legal precedent. It is still being used by courts to decide property rights cases brought by Native Americans against the U.S. and against non-Natives.

In the 21st century U.S., that legacy of domination is reflected in the undermined sovereignty of our indigenous communities and through Congressional and Federal assertions of power over the tribes. We see this lived out through injustices in water rights, oil and mineral extraction on native lands, border and immigration policies which negatively affect tribal communities, and the impact of sequestration budget cuts on native communities, to name a few. (Elizabeth Leung)

“Earth Day: A Day for Righting Human Wrongs”

“Before There Were Roses” by Ken Medema

Before there were roses, before there were rhymes or rivers that
ran to the sea, before there were mountains, mornings or
meadows or birds making homes in trees, before there were
pictures or pathos or passion or minstrels with songs to sing:
there was Weaver alone, one in all-all in one
The Maker of Everything.

Now of all of the wonders the weaver created could this be the
greatest tale? New friends and companions with knowledge and
language and purpose and power and will, to gather the threads
of the Weaver’s abundance and though every mystery,
to share with their maker the joy of creation,
the infinite tapestry.

What shall we say of the making of humans, whom God the
great weaver designed, and gave them the freedom, the
knowledge and will, the wisdom to seek and to find. But some
took the delicate thread of creation to tear it and steal it away,
to reap new inventions, destructive and greedy,
and thus was begun a new day.

So into the chaos, destruction and ruin did Weaver come once
again, to stand as a healer beside the afflicted, a comfort to
those who know pain. For Weaver whose love goes beyond and
reach heaven, did cause that a child should be born,
who bore Weavers heart to the whole of creation
and suffered abuses and scorn.

So death did its best with the Weaver’s beloved and sought to
destroy the king, but life was the winner and could not be
silenced by evils destructive schemes. And this is the home of
the children of Easter, the foolish it seems to be,
the one who is dead is alive
and weaving the tapestry.