

REMEMBERING ECO-MARTYRS AND ALL OF CREATION *ON ALL SAINTS AND ALL SOULS*

BACKGROUND

Each year on November 1 and 2, Catholics around the world remember and pray for our loved ones and the community of saints who have died and returned home to God, Creator of Life.

This year, GCCM invites you to remember the countless number of martyrs who have been killed in their defense of the natural world. We also invite you to pray for members of our Earth community that have gone extinct, and for places in the natural world that have been wounded by human choices and systemic policies of consumption, extraction, and exploitation.

In the same way we pray, light candles, and visit the dearly beloved who have passed on to eternal life, may these days of All Saints and All Souls be a time when we honor the earth and all living creatures with whom we share this common home. Please use the prayer below to remember some of the eco-martyrs, places, and creatures who have passed on to God.

PRAYER OF CREATION FOR ALL SAINTS AND ALL SOULS DAY

God of all Creation,
Today we remember all life that has journeyed back to You.

We remember family and friends
Who have closely touched our lives..

We remember our sisters and brothers
Who are nameless to us but form part of our global family.

We remember our eco-martyr sisters and brothers
Who have had their lives violently and unjustly taken from them for their defense of Creation.

We remember creatures big and small,
Which through human-induced extinction no longer roam the land, soar through the skies, or swim in the oceans.

We remember the natural world, lakes and rivers, forests and fields, mountains and valleys
That have been destroyed for human consumption.

We believe that You came for the salvation of the entire world and all the life it holds.
We trust that You have welcomed all Creation that has died in this earthly world into the Cosmic Home.

May we all be united in the love of the Cosmic Christ that is infinite and forever.

Amen.

WE REMEMBER THE ECO-MARTYRS

“Here I want to recognize, encourage and thank all those striving in countless ways to guarantee the protection of the home which we share.” (Laudato Si’, #13)

We call to mind the 158 environmental defenders who have been killed so far in 2017 while protecting their communities’ lands or natural resources. Here are just a few of the eco-martyrs from the last few years:

- **Waldomiro Costa Pereira** was a Brazilian land rights activist who fought for agricultural reform. In March of 2017 he was shot and killed while recovering from a previous assassination attempt.
- **Renato Anglao** was a leader in the struggle against human rights violations of indigenous people and their lands in the Philippines. He was killed in February 2017.
- **Inspector Manzoor**, one of two rangers who were shot after intercepting bird poachers in Punjab. He was killed on 24 September, 2017 in Pakistan.
- **Wayne Lotter**, a leading elephant conservationist and head of an anti-poaching NGO was shot dead in Tanzania on 16 August 2017.
- **Berta Cáceres** worked for decades defending the habitat and rights of the Lenca people in Honduras. Berta was murdered in her home in Honduras in March 2016.
- **Sr. Dorothy Stang** lived for four decades in the Brazilian Amazon, defending the forest and the lands of the poor. She was shot in February 2005 following years of death threats.

See more here: <http://bit.ly/ecomartyr>

WE REMEMBER SPECIES THAT HAVE GONE EXTINCT

Because of us, thousands of species will no longer give glory to God by their very existence, nor convey their message to us. We have no such right. (Laudato Si’, #33)

The World Wildlife Fund estimates at least 10,000 species go extinct each year. Here are a few:

- **The Tecopa Pupfish** became extinct following development in the Mojave desert in the mid-20th century.
- **The Caribbean Monk Seal** was hunted for its fur, meat, and oil. It was declared extinct in 2008.
- **The Western Black Rhino**, hunted in large numbers for its horn, was declared extinct in 2011.
- **The Lake Pedder Earthworm** lived in Lake Pedder, Tasmania, and became extinct when the lake was flooded for a hydro electric power generation in 1972.

See more extinct species here: <http://www.iucnredlist.org/>