

WITNESS FOR JUSTICE

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“The Earth Is the Lord’s and the Fullness Thereof”

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How wonderful are these words from the Psalmist (Psalm 24) who rejoices in the beauty of God’s creation – the earth. Our planet. Our home. If you look up the word “earth” in a Concordance for the Bible, which will tell you every verse in both testaments that contain the word “earth,” you will see hundreds of verses from Genesis to Revelation cited.

The earth must be very important to God.

Growing up, one of my favorite hymns to sing was “For the Beauty of the Earth.” The freshness of spring is happening right now all around us as flowering trees catch our breath and patches of daffodils and tulips divert our gaze. The birds are back in full song and robins tug worms out of the warming soil. And yes, it’s yard work time again.

With everything in me that loves the smells and sounds and sights and feel of the earth, I want to appeal to all of us to be kind to it as we begin the spring rituals of weeding and planting and fertilizing. Be kind to it and to our children and our neighbors and use organic products that will not cause cancers or asthma and that will not pollute the ground water that runs off from your yard. You can achieve a healthy, green lawn and a weed-free vegetable or flower bed without resorting to petrochemical-based weed killers and fertilizers.

The Canadian Province of Ontario has banned the use of harmful, chemically based products throughout the territory. No household or commercial property, no public or state-owned space can be treated with anything but organic, benign products. There’s a booming business now for these alternative methods of keeping the weeds at bay and vegetables growing healthfully. And there has been the start of the reduction in the number of

miscarriages occurring in Ontario and the rate of cancer and other illnesses thought to be associated with exposure to petrochemical-based products.

Local home and yard stores now carry more organic products than ever. Landscaping services do too, and some specialize in organic lawn and garden care. Check them out. A little more sweat equity might be required but then again, we as a country need to drop a few pounds anyway. Some earth friendly products can be created right at home-like compost-for free.

Don’t be suckered into the commercials on TV that show dandelion-free expanses of lawns. Maybe there are no weeds – but danger lurks in the soil. Do the right thing for your yard and for our planet. Let your children run barefoot in the grass without having to worry about what they are absorbing into their tender and vulnerable bodies, which might cause harm to their brains or lungs or livers. Pesticides and herbicides will kill the bugs and weeds – and will also kill us. (Do a search on the internet for “organic lawn care” and a wealth of information will come up.)

The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof – and we have been given this tremendous gift to tend and care for. Earth Day, which celebrates a 40th anniversary on April 22, should be everyday so that the earth can “bring forth living creatures of all kinds” forever. And ever. Amen.

Earth Day resources from the White House can be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/earthday>

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