

Chancel Drama – Nice to Meet You, Terra! – Creation Justice/Care Texts: Psalm 8, Psalm 24 (passim), Matthew 6:25-33, Luke 12:16-21

James F. D. Martin Earth Day/Traveling Service (asking permission and/or honorarium is appreciated - James Martin [james71martin@gmail.com](mailto:james71martin@gmail.com))

God: Here are the keys! There you go! Take good care of it, and it'll take care of you.

Human 1: Wow! Thank you. It's beautiful. [Pause.] What is it?

God: It's a planet. And you are the first ones on your block to inhabit one. I am its Creator, and I made it just for you, as well as all of your flora and fauna friends.

Human 2: Thank you so much! [Looks around.] What does it do?

God: Do? What does it DO??? Everything you need it to. It'll take care of you if you take care of it. It is your home. This is where you live.

Human 3: It's wonderful! Thanks! But we can't just call it "It." Does "It" have a name?

God: Yes, two names: "Terra Firma." Or you may simply call it the Earth.

Human 4: How does the Earth run? Batteries? Or do we plug it in somewhere?

God: No, the Earth is cordless, and it's really quite complex. Her main power source is the Sun—that beautiful thing. [All look up.] But DON'T LOOK AT IT. It'll burn your eyes! You'll need special lenses that you can develop later.

Human 1: Warmth from the sun—that sounds simple enough. Is that all?

God: No, there's wind power.

Human 2: Wind?

God: [Blows hard at Human 2] That's wind. And geothermal energy, heat from deep within the Earth, and hydroelectric, and chemical energy, and nuclear energy—but I wouldn't recommend it... not until you figure out what to do with the waste.

Actually, the same is true for chemical energy—that's how you get fire—use it sparingly—and remember to clean up after yourselves. You'll discover all these things—and more! I'm entrusting the Earth to your care. She is your home. Remember me as Earth's Creator—yours, too, for that matter—and I will watch over you. Farewell! [Exits]

All Humans: [Waving.] We will remember this Day of Blessing forever and ever!

[Pause – to one another.] All right! Let's get busy! [Exit]

[Signs – Many millennia pass. (Then) The Industrial Age]

Human 1: Wow! Look at all of the neat things we can do by burning stuff!!

Human 2: Yeah, we can burn wood... and grass... and olive oil... and peat... and coal... and petroleum... and whale oil... and witches!

Human 3: Not witches! That should never have happened.

Human 4: [Coughing.] It's getting kind of smoky, isn't it? Sometimes I can hardly breathe. As God said long ago, "Remember to clean up after yourselves."

Human 1: I don't think that's what God meant. More like, "Keep your living room neat and tidy. And dump your garbage where no one can see it."

Human 3: That's another thing—garbage. We didn't plan for that. And we weren't planning to have all of these rats.

Human 1: Think of them as pets! Pets with sharp teeth. No different than a dog, really.

Human 4: They're not very friendly. More like "pests" than "pets."

Human 2: Well, that's progress. We have to live with the down side, too. We'll just... sweep the garbage under the rug... dump it in the rivers... the oceans... the air! Human 4: And what about all of the plagues we've been getting. Cities around the world are being devastated by all the disease.

Human 1: Aren't you the one who complains about overcrowding in the cities? Well, there you go! Problem solved!

God: [Entering] What's all this then? [Coughs] I can hardly see because of the smoke! OR breathe! Is this what you call taking care of your home?

Human 2: As I was explaining to the others, it's all part of progress. We haven't worked out all of the bugs yet.

Human 3: [Alarmed] I think I'm growing another head! I'm mutating!

God: [Pauses, looks at Human 3] Speaking of bugs, there never used to be this many flies! In numbers like this, they can carry deadly diseases!

Human 1: Think of them as pollinators—beautiful, essential pollinators.

God: They're flies. And what are we standing on?

Human 3: It's a garbage dump. That's how they said we should keep our home clean.

Human 2: Tattle tail!

God: A garbage dump? Did you gather it here from all over the world?

Human 2: [Sheepishly] No, this is just from Boston, not even New York. They dump theirs in the ocean.

God: People, my people! Let me explain something to you. [They all gather in a huddle] If you don't start cleaning up after yourselves, all of this is going to get even worse—more smoke in

the air, water you can't drink, land you can't farm, dying trees... people AND animals dying from disease—do you understand?

[They all nod.] The Earth is still a wonderful, beautiful place, but you have to do better at taking care of it. Remember, it is my creation, entrusted to your care. Honor the Earth and you honor me.

[Signs – Many years pass. (Then) The New Millennium]

Human 1: Are we the creative geniuses, or what? We are the supreme creators!

Human 2: Yeah! Look at all we've accomplished: cities in the middle of deserts, sky scrapers half way to the moon, nuclear plants that spew out clouds of radiation, rainforests that now graze beef cattle, shrinking polar ice caps, zillions of miles of pavement, lakes and rivers that start on fire—that was cool! We should write a song: Fifty Ways to Warm Your Planet. Can we humans shape the world, or what?

Human 1: We humans are the crème de la crème! The top bananas, the cat's pajamas!

Human 3: I don't think we should brag about this. It seems we've changed the Earth way too much—maybe more to our liking, but the Earth itself is suffering, and won't endure this forever without responding. In fact, it already is.

Human 2: Why do you say that? We're just getting things set the way we like it.

Human 3: You act as if we're the center of the universe.

Human 4: I don't think this is what God intended for us to do with our home, how to take care of it and clean up after ourselves.

Human 1: God? You still believe in that old myth? "God" is just a fallacy, a fantasy.

Human 4: So you think we humans have replaced God now?

Human 1: There never really was a God—just somebody's invention to control people.

Human 2: Yeah. We don't need to listen to "God" anymore. We know what's best. God: [Enters] Hi! What did I miss? [Looks around.] Quite a lot, I guess. I just came from the Arctic Circle—what's left of it. Well, the circle is still there, but the ice... and the tundra in Russia, northern Canada, and Alaska. It's melting... and releasing lots of methane and carbon dioxide. This is bad.

Human 3: Hey! There you are! [Pointing] They think you're a fallacy... a myth.

Human 2: Tattle tail!

God: I am? [Feels self.] I feel pretty real to me.

Human 1: Well, it's just that... we humans really don't need you anymore. The ancients said that you put the Earth at our disposal, so we've taken it from there.

God: "Disposal" is right. This your evidence of wisdom—what I've been seeing?

Human 2: Pretty impressive, eh?

God: That's really not the word. Alarming is more like it.

Human 1: There isn't any proof that we're messing things up—AND... we're making tons of money... at least some of us are.

God: Proof? Can't you see the world changing before your eyes—way faster than at any point in Earth's history? You're ignoring the best of human science.

Human 1: What science? It's all inconclusive.

God: You want real science? Research by YOUR best scientists—from all over the world—has concluded that the Earth is now in its sixth mass extinction event in its history—the Holocene Era—and that it is due to human activity, mainly population growth and overconsumption of the earth's natural resources. Out of an estimated 8 million species in the world, 1 million plant and animal species are currently threatened with extinction. A German study completed in late 2021 estimated that those million species—and more—could go extinct within a decade in the "largest mass extinction event since the end of the dinosaur age."

Human 1: That dinosaur thing was caused by a catastrophe.

God: And it appears... you, my people, are behaving like another catastrophe.

[All pause and think.]

Human 2: Hey, God. You're supposed to make us feel good about ourselves.

God: Wouldn't you rather that I tell you the truth? For too long you've had too many people lying to you, confusing you, paralyzing any real action, and getting rich in the process. "More research is needed," they say, when they've known the truth for decades, willing to sacrifice this planet for their own greed. By doing so, they have threatened the future of the only planet you will call home.

Human 1: Well... we could just climb into a spaceship and move to Mars.

Human 3: What, all of us?

Human 4: Have you seen any selfies from Mars?

Human 2: I guess I'd be willing to pitch in and start recycling and picking up litter.

Human 3: Well, that'll solve everything!

Human 1: Just so you know, Elon Musk is a personal friend of mine, and I'm sure he would give me a ride somewhere on one of his rockets, away from all of this.

Human 4: Yeah... good luck with that.

Human 2: OK, God. We're sorry. Could you give us another planet? We'll improve.

God: Another planet? It'll take a few billion years, and I'm not sure you'd do any better. Beside the fact that we're not done with the Earth yet. But you need to learn to stick together, to seek what's best for everyone—for the whole planet—not just a few. Then, I believe, you might have a chance. [All bow, exit. – The End]