

# Down to Humus



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“The word ‘humble’ comes from ‘humus’ derived from the Latin meaning earth or ground. Humus is matter essential for fertility of the soil. It is integral to the cycle of life; plants need it for growth... Thus it is appropriate that in our mission statement, we commit ourselves to care for the earth itself.” -Bernadine Pieper, CHM. Taken from *The Humility Woman Booklet*, page 3.

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## Practicing Care of Earth as an Act of Reverence

There is a quiet moment that happens almost without notice: water spilling gently onto a garden bed, soil dark and ready to receive it. Hands press seeds into the earth. A breeze moves through prairie grasses. Nothing dramatic, nothing urgent—and yet, something sacred is taking place.



Too often, care for the Earth is framed as obligation, responsibility, or even burden. We hear about climate change, resource depletion, and environmental crisis, and the call to respond can feel overwhelming. The conversation becomes filled with statistics, policies, and urgency. While these realities are important, they can unintentionally distance us from something more fundamental: our relationship with creation itself. What if caring for the Earth is not first a task to complete, but a relationship to honor?

At its heart, reverence is about recognizing the sacredness of something beyond ourselves. It invites us to pause, to notice, to approach with humility rather

than control. When we begin to see the Earth not simply as a resource, but as a living expression of God’s presence, our actions shift. What we do—and how we do it—becomes infused with meaning.

Pope Francis, in *Laudato Si’*, calls us to an “ecological conversion,” a transformation that is not only external but deeply spiritual. It is a shift from domination to kinship, from consumption to care. This kind of conversion does not begin in large-scale systems, but in the quiet spaces of daily life—where reverence is practiced, one choice at a time.





Reverence is not found in grand gestures, but in the spirit with which we engage the ordinary. To compost is to acknowledge that nothing in creation is without value. To conserve water is to recognize its preciousness. To tend a garden is to participate, in a small but meaningful way, in the ongoing work of creation. Even preparing and sharing a meal becomes an act of gratitude when we are mindful of where our food comes from and the many hands—and elements—that made it possible.

Reverence also calls us into deeper attentiveness. It asks us to slow down enough to notice the world around us: the return of birds in spring, the resilience of plants pushing through the soil, the quiet presence of wildlife moving through familiar spaces. In these moments, we are reminded that we are not separate from creation, but part of it.

This perspective can change not only what we do, but how we live.

When we approach the Earth with reverence, our actions become less about checking boxes and more about cultivating relationship. We begin to ask different questions—not “What do I have to do?” but “How am I called to care?” Not “How much difference can I

make?” but “How can I be more present, more mindful, more grateful?”

The answers may be simple. Choosing to reduce waste. Being intentional with water and energy use. Supporting sustainable practices. Spending time in nature not as an escape, but as an encounter.

None of these actions alone will solve the environmental challenges we face. But together, they shape something essential: a way of being in the world that reflects respect, humility, and love for creation. And that is no small thing.

Because when care for the Earth is rooted in reverence, it becomes sustainable in the deepest sense of the word. It is no longer driven by fear or obligation, but by connection. It becomes less about reacting to crisis and more about living in right relationship—with God, with one another, and with the Earth itself.

In the end, the invitation is simple.

To see differently.

To act intentionally.

To recognize the sacred in what is often overlooked.

And to remember that every act of care—no matter how small—is, at its core, an act of reverence.

A simple, nourishing meal that honors the goodness of whole foods and mindful preparation



## Garden Gratitude Bowl

### Ingredients (Serves 2-3):

- Base:
  - 1 cup quinoa or brown rice
  - 2 cups water or vegetable broth
- Vegetables (choose seasonal / what you have):
  - 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
  - 1 cup cucumbers, chopped
  - 1 bell pepper, diced
  - 1–2 cups roasted vegetables (carrots, zucchini, sweet potatoes, or Brussels sprouts)
  - 2 cups fresh greens (spinach, arugula, or kale)
- Protein (optional but recommended):
  - 1 cup chickpeas (drained and rinsed) or
  - 2 hard-boiled eggs, sliced
- Simple Dressing:
  - 3 Tbsp olive oil
  - 1–2 Tbsp lemon juice or vinegar
  - 1 tsp honey or maple syrup
  - Salt and pepper to taste
- Optional toppings:
  - Avocado slices
  - Fresh herbs (parsley, cilantro, basil)
  - Seeds or nuts (sunflower seeds, almonds, walnuts)
  - Crumbled feta or goat cheese

### Instructions

1. Cook the grains:  
Rinse quinoa or rice. Cook in water or broth according to package directions. Let cool slightly.
2. Prepare the vegetables  
Chop fresh vegetables. Roast any vegetables at 400°F with a drizzle of oil, salt, and pepper for 20–25 minutes until tender.
3. Make the dressing:  
Whisk olive oil, lemon juice, honey, salt, and pepper.
4. Assemble the bowl:  
Start with grains, then layer vegetables, greens, and protein.
5. Finish with intention:  
Drizzle dressing, add toppings, and take a moment before eating—pause in gratitude.

### A Practice of Reverence

*Before eating take a brief pause —Notice the colors, textures, and aromas, consider where the ingredients came from, offer a simple prayer or moment of gratitude:  
“May this meal remind us of our connection to the Earth and to one another.”*