

Sing, Sing, Alleluia Good morning: are welcome to share together a little time of this day
[More Songs 2²] consciously together in the presence of God, whom we worship & praise,
both in prayer and in the way we live. And if perhaps we're also aware
that we don't pray as much or as well as we feel we should, or that
the way we live maybe doesn't always give honour, praise or glory to
God, well then, that might be an invitation to reflection, to repentance,
to changing our hearts and turning more towards the Lord, our God, who
rede us, to whom we belong. Whatever way best suits you, may these
few Monday morning minutes help make your day before God; no matter what
chores, problems, distractions you have, may you feel a little more that God
is there with you, and so ^{yourself} become more alive to God in the world & people round
you. For your connection with God (your religion, in the root meaning of
that word) is not something isolated or purely private: it involves you with
others & with all of God's creation — something that perhaps we ought to
reflect about more. Well, in a parallel way, last month's so-called
"Earth Summit" in Rio de Janeiro was a similar invitation to reflect —
so many people & so much effort in a common concern for our earth and
its future, aware of connections between people and environment, between
what we do and how others live, how our world can (or maybe can not)
survive. There's always been a tendency, or temptation for Christians to seek
an other-worldly perfection before that other world is with us, to withdraw
from the world and creation. There is, of course, a legitimate aspect of this in

Christian spirituality, in the search to integrate all of human life & creation into,
the following of Christ, the new creation who renews all things in God. We who
are Christians take the words & life & behaviour of Jesus as the norm for our
understanding of how to live a good life. So we have to return again to
that gospel occasion when a lawyer asked Jesus what he should do to inherit
eternal life: and on Jesus' prompting, recited what the scriptures had said:
"You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with
all your strength, and with all your mind: and your neighbour as yourself."
"Do this", Jesus said, "and life is yours". But the lawyer questioned who
was covered by that word "neighbour" — and Jesus didn't give any
definition, but instead told a story that's become known as "the good Samaritan",
with its punch-line of "Which of these three men do you think proved himself
a neighbour to the man who fell into brigands' hands." And when the lawyer
replied, "the one who took pity on him", Jesus said "So and do the same
yourself." And that's His word to all of us: to do, to make ourselves
neighbours to others, because that's part of what it means to love God with
all our hearts & souls. Wouldn't you think, then, that the concerns & worries
that brought nations & heads of state to meet together in Brazil last month
would've had a special interest and appeal for all Christians, especially in
so much as they concerned people & their lives in the vastly greater part
of the world that's underfed & underprivileged... people who are our
brothers & sisters, not indeed in the blood-family sense, the racial sense,

the nationalistic sense, even the religious sense, but as children of the one God, sharing so unequally the garden and the gifts that are, for the present, our mutual common home. Think - pray over that, today: and in a prayer song for now, "Those who do justice" MUSIC

PRAYERS (4. opposite page)

Practical politics

Companions on Journey 16 3:23

the scoring of points off others, superficial and simplistic expectations and presumptions may have prevented the Earth Summit from achieving all it could have done for the preservation and development of our planet's natural environment, and the relief of suffering, injustice, hunger that are the ordinary life-experience of most of the world's population. But if the effort itself, and the growing awareness, especially among young people, of the ills that we inflict on our planet & each other... if this will touch our consciences, to make us take Jesus' word more seriously, then in the long run maybe we each can contribute more to the renewing of our earth and its transformation: not simply as a human task, but as part of Jesus' saving work, healing & reconciling people, taking everything into God's love, so that creation and its creator together become again the environment in which we learn of God, of love, of sharing; and so we can truly give praise & glory to God as one family together.

A prayer of British Cardinal Hume, on the occasion of last month's Earth Summit. "Lord of all creation, Father of us all, the poor & the starving cry out to you for justice and the right to a human existence. We recognise that we in developed countries so often contribute to their misery and degradation. Again, in our ignorance & blindness, we have squandered the resources of our creation and abused what you entrusted to our care. For this we ask forgiveness, Father, we need now to repair the harm we have done and to build up our common home on this planet. Lord, grant to the leaders of the world and their peoples new vision, greater understanding, a spirit of human solidarity. () May we all be enlightened and inspired to reach beyond national interests and to take joint responsibility for our future () Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and renew the face of the earth.