

Creation: A Relationship Of Respect

Rev. Patrick Stephens

*First Week of Lent
Tuesday March 8*

Scripture

Genesis 1:11-12

Then God said, 'Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.' And it was so the earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good

Reflection

I am not an artist, though I have always enjoyed creating things. Craft- kits, meal recipes, and step-by-step instructions have mostly led to good results for my efforts. I also enjoy gardening. There is nothing that compares with the simple satisfaction of watching a tiny corner of cultivated land spring forth, season after season, under my care and supervision. It brings me much satisfaction and delight.

As I plan the planting of my garden this spring, I am interested in the connection between stewardship of the Earth and what so many of us do in our own backyards, on our balconies, and at neighbourhood garden plots. Whatever the scale of our horticultural endeavours, we are all participating in the ancient and necessary work of nurturing life.

Some gardening practices are much more kind to the earth than others. A small commitment I have made is to avoid using pesticides, and to plant native species, whenever possible. Perhaps you have a highly sustainable approach to gardening. Perhaps you are not experienced in growing plants at all. Whatever our level of engagement with horticulture, caring for even a single plant can help us feel more connected to our natural ecosystem.

Give it a try: try caring for a small garden this year and immerse yourself in the work and joy of getting your hands dirty. As you do so, allow yourself to be open to the care for creation on a much greater scale

Prayer

*For the fruit(s) of all creation,
thanks be to God;
for the gifts of every nation,
thanks be to God;*

*for the ploughing, sowing, reaping,
silent growth while we are sleeping,
future needs in earth's safe-keeping,
thanks be to God.
Fred Pratt Green, Hymn #259 Common Praise*

Small gardens yield big in Burundi

The Mayengo Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp in Burundi is filled with displaced people from around Bujumbura who were victims of a landslide in 2015, killing dozens of people and destroying 349 houses, a health centre and a school. The disaster left behind families without anything, not even their basic needs. In March 2018, those people were displaced to the colline or hillside area of Mayengo. Mayengo is one of the 18 collines in the catchment area for Village Health Works, PWRDF's Burundi partner in the All Mothers and Children Count program, funded with a 6:1 match from the Government of Canada. The four-year program concludes at the end of March 2020. VHW has seen an increasing number of patients from this area, especially high numbers of malnutrition patients. As part of the AMCC project, VHW decided to implement a kitchen garden project with households from the camp. The project has improved food security and nutrition among the people. "I would like to sincerely thank the Village for bringing us knowledge about the importance of building kitchen gardens," says Rekatubane Annonciate, one of the 94 people who received vegetable seeds. "I have seven children, five of whom were malnourished. I kept coming to the clinic for food supplements, and I did not see a significant change in their evolution because coming home, we took the same foods and my children were still relapsing." Rekatubane notes that learning about kitchen gardens helped her discover how to plant seeds in a small amount of space. "Now my meals are varied, and I do not come to the Kigutu clinic for food supplementation anymore. My kitchen garden provides me with enough food to harvest and feed my family. I have almost everything, including carrots, salads, cabbages, onions, tomatoes, radishes. I really I do not know how I could thank the Village. It is like a parent who cares for us, he has saved us and our children from hunger." In addition to the seeds, the 94 households also received sprayers, shovels, and wheelbarrows to facilitate their maintenance of these kitchen gardens.

Read the whole story on our website at <https://pwrdf.org/small-gardens-yield-big-in-burundi/>