




# JAEI

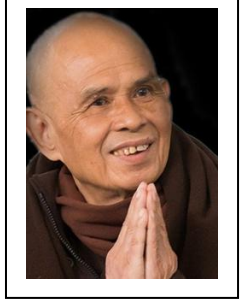
## February 2026 Environmental Prayer Diary


*The purpose of this Prayer Diary is to provide subjects for your reflection and prayer as the Spirit moves you*


<p><b>Sunday</b></p>	<p>1</p>	<p>Lord of Life, Protector of Animals, watch over all whales in the vast ocean. Open our eyes to the harm we cause and guide us to ease their plight and honour their sacred existence.</p> <p>May we be inspired by the whale's journey, filtering out what harms us and embracing what nourishes us, living with humility and compassion for all creatures. Amen.</p>
<p><b>Monday</b></p>	<p>2</p>	<p><b>World Wetland Day</b></p> <p>2026 theme: <b><i>"Wetlands and traditional knowledge: Celebrating cultural heritage"</i></b></p> <p>This theme focuses on the deep-rooted connection between wetland ecosystems and the cultural traditions of communities worldwide. The initiative aims to showcase how traditional knowledge is crucial for sustaining wetlands and preserving cultural identity, and it encourages dialogue between indigenous peoples, local communities, policymakers, and researchers to promote the integration of this</p> <div data-bbox="448 1131 694 1400" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>knowledge into conservation efforts. Resources, such as toolkits and case studies, are available to help raise awareness and highlight the importance of cultural values in wetland protection and management.</p> <p>South Africa celebrates the cultural heritage of wetlands through sites like the iSimangaliso Wetland Park (<a href="#">UNESCO World Heritage Site</a>) in KwaZulu-Natal, and by incorporating traditional knowledge into conservation efforts.</p> <p>Local communities, particularly women farmers, share their ancestral knowledge of wetland farming, cultivating indigenous crops and using traditional wisdom for environmental stewardship. This intergenerational exchange and the recognition of these wetlands as a cultural landscape highlight the deep connection between local communities and their natural heritage, which is crucial for safeguarding ecosystems for the future.</p> <p>Protecting wetlands goes further than this year's theme - it's vitally important for the future of the planet. Wetlands provide many benefits to the environment and people: They are home to a wide variety of biodiversity; help regulate the climate; are natural filters of harmful substances from water, such as fertilizers, pesticides, heavy metals, and toxins and help reduce the destructive power of floods and storms.</p> <p>People can have direct impacts on wetlands by filling, grading, removal of vegetation, building construction and changes in water levels and drainage</p> <div data-bbox="1201 710 1485 1059" data-label="Image"> </div>

		<p>patterns, indiscriminate use of pesticides and fertilizers and introduction of alien vegetation.</p> <p><b><i>Our Creator designed wetlands with the utmost care to serve the environment (and ultimately us) – consider what actions we can all take to improve wetland security.</i></b></p>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>3</b>	<p>We thank you, creator God, for the goodly heritage you offer us, from green downland to the deep salt seas, and for the abundant world we share with your creation. Keep us so mindful of its needs and those of all with whom we share, that open to your Spirit we may discern and practice all that makes for its wellbeing, through Jesus Christ our Lord,</p> <p><b><i>Rev. Peter Lippiett</i></b></p>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>4</b>	<p><b>Psalm 29</b></p> <p><sup>1</sup> Ascribe to the Lord, you heavenly beings, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. <sup>2</sup> Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendour of his holiness. <sup>3</sup> The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the Lord thunders over the mighty waters. <sup>4</sup> The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is majestic. <sup>5</sup> The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars; the Lord breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon. <sup>6</sup> He makes Lebanon leap like a calf, Sirion like a young wild ox. <sup>7</sup> The voice of the Lord strikes with flashes of lightning. <sup>8</sup> The voice of the Lord shakes the desert; the Lord shakes the Desert of Kadesh. <sup>9</sup> The voice of the Lord twists the oaks and strips the forests bare. And in his temple all cry, “Glory!” <sup>10</sup> The Lord sits enthroned over the flood; the Lord is enthroned as King forever. <sup>11</sup> The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace.</p>

<p><b>Thursday</b></p>	<p><b>5</b></p>	<p>“Your mind is like a piece of land planted with many different kinds of seeds: seeds of joy, peace, mindfulness, understanding, and love; seeds of craving, anger, fear, hate, and forgetfulness. These wholesome and unwholesome seeds are always there, sleeping in the soil of your mind.</p> <p>The quality of your life depends on the seeds you water. If you plant tomato seeds in your gardens, tomatoes will grow. Just so, if you water a seed of peace in your mind, peace will grow. When the seeds of happiness in you are watered, you will become happy.</p> <p>When the seed of anger in you is watered, you will become angry. The seeds that are watered frequently are those that will grow strong.”</p> <p><b><i>Thich Nhat Hanh</i></b></p>
<p><b>Friday</b></p>	<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b><i>Pray for</i></b> more ambition from leaders so the door to keeping global warming below the danger-threshold remains open and that ways will be found to deliver financial to help poor countries – those who are hit hardest.</p>
<p><b>Saturday</b></p>	<p><b>7</b></p>	
<p><b>Sunday</b></p>	<p><b>8</b></p>	<p>Creator God,  You have called us to be keepers of your Earth.  Through greed, we have established an economy that destroys the web of life.  We have changed our climate and down in despair.  Let oceans of justice flow.  May we learn to sustain and renew the life of our Mother, Earth.  Help us to share the resources you have given us to raise our voices for justice and to bear the cost of change.  May our leaders act with compassion and courage and lead us in the path of justice for the sake of our children and our children’s children.  Amen.</p> <p><b><i>Prayer by Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu (2018)</i></b></p>



<p><b>Monday</b></p>		<p><b>God of Grace and Mystery</b></p> <p>God of grace and mystery  From your fullness overflows  More than we can ever hold  Fill us with a melody  Rising up to greet the dawn  Joining in creation's song  Holy, Holy, Holy (x2)</p> <p>God of hospitality  Here within the world you make  Every creature finds its place  As we hear your symphony  Call us now to join the dance  Held and led within your hands  Holy, Holy, Holy (x2)</p> <p>God creating all we see  All that lives beyond our gaze  Fill the earth with breath and praise  Call us into harmony  Teach us how to join with you  Ever making all things new  Holy, Holy, Holy (x2)</p> <p><i>Songwriters: Paul Zach / Isaac Wardell / Nicholas Chambers / Kate Bluett  God of Grace and Mystery lyrics © Integrity's Alleluia! Music, Paul Zach  Publishing, Pg Songs And Hymns, Kate Bluett Music</i></p> <p><a href="#">Listen</a></p>
<p><b>Tuesday</b></p>	<p><b>10</b></p>	<p>Gracious God,  Share with us your heart for creation,  That we may cherish all life,  Working together to heal the damage we have done  Knowing that in all our struggles  You are beside us, to inspire  Strengthen and transform us  Through Christ, our Lord and Saviour  Amen</p>
<p><b>Wednesday</b></p>	<p><b>11</b></p>	 <p>Our sisters the birds are  praising their Creator...</p> <p>so we should go in among them  and chant the Lord's praises...</p> <p>-St. Francis of Assisi</p>

<p><b>Thursday</b></p>	<p><b>12</b></p>	<p><b>In Our End Is Our Beginning - Returning to Love</b></p> <p>T. S. Eliot writes, “We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time” (Little Gidding, Part V, “Four Quartets”). We return where we began, to the eternal embrace of Divine Love. We were formed by original blessing, but we’ve heard so often the story of “original sin” that we have to be reminded of our beginnings in beauty and union.</p>  <p>Rob Bell shared at CAC’s CONSPIRE event this year how the Christian Creation narrative is uniquely hopeful. The creation poem in Genesis 1 is a “confrontive story,” portraying something radically different than the common creation stories of its time; rather than “violence and destruction,” the Genesis mythos shows “overflowing joy and creativity.” Knowing we began as an expression of God’s desire for relationship allows us to trust that life is headed somewhere good, into new forms of Love making itself known, oneing all things in a whole and expanding universe. As one Pauline translation puts it “The whole of creation is standing on tip toe to see the full revelation of the children of God” (Romans 8:19).</p> <p>The story ends where it begins: in life and now even in “life more abundantly” (John 10:10). This Life came from “nowhere” (<i>creatio ex nihilo</i>) and now has my name upon it. From death—the small dyings to the False Self and our eventual physical death—comes resurrection into our True Self, who we have been all along but have simply forgotten. As you look back on a year almost ended and forward to a year about to begin, recall the ways in which God has been inviting you to return, again and again, to Love, which is the same as returning to God.</p> <p><b>Gateway to Silence:</b></p> <p>God, keep me in your truth.</p> <p><b>Richard Rohr</b>  <a href="https://cac.org">https://cac.org</a></p>
<p><b>Friday</b></p>	<p><b>13</b></p>	<p>God of all,  you made the earth and saw that it was good, but like robbers we have stripped it of its treasure.  <b>Open our eyes, Lord.</b></p> <p>Now the earth cries out and your people hunger and thirst.  <b>Open our eyes, Lord.</b></p> <p>Open our eyes to see the pain of your creation and move us with compassion for your world.  <b>Open our eyes, Lord.</b></p> <p>Lead us to act as neighbours, who do not pass by on the other side.  <b>Open our eyes, Lord.</b></p> <p>So that together we may care for all that you have made and with all creation sing your praise.  <b>Open our eyes, Lord.</b></p> <p><b>Catherine Gorman/CAFOD</b></p>

Saturday

14

### World Whale Day (15 February)

We need to thank Greg Kauffman, founder of the Pacific Whale Foundation, for initiating the annual World Whale Day. Greg Kauffman started World Whale



Day in 1980 on Maui, Hawaii, to raise awareness about the threat of extinction faced by humpback whales, which were known to swim off the coast of the island. The annual observance was established to remind people of the importance of whale conservation and to encourage action to protect them from threats like commercial whaling.

Whales inhabit all of the earth's oceans and, sadly, the oceans are not as healthy today as they once were. What used to be a lovely place for our whale friends to live has become polluted by toxic materials such as chemicals, oil spills, plastic litter and industrial waste that is a threat to the whale populations of today and the future. Climate change isn't helping either!

Historic whale populations in South Africa were decimated by commercial whaling, which peaked in the 18th and 19th centuries and reduced southern right whale numbers to as few as 2,000 by the 1830s. In the 1970s, humpback whale populations were similarly reduced to about 600 individuals but have since recovered significantly due to whaling bans. Today, South African waters are a critical breeding ground for both southern right whales and humpback whales, which are now considered to be in recovery and growing in number.

South Africa is home to several whale species, including migratory Southern Right and Humpback whales, as well as resident Bryde's whales. Other species like sperm whales, Minke whales, and killer whales (Orcas – which are actually oversized dolphins, ) are also occasionally seen. Whale watching season is typically from June to November, with peak times varying by species and location, and is best observed in areas like the Garden Route, Hermanus, and the Eastern Cape.


Sadly our whales still face significant threats in South African waters. Ship strikes from increased shipping and small boats, and the impacts of climate change, such as warming oceans and changes in prey availability pose a major threat to our whales. Other dangers are plastic ingestion, noise pollution from seismic surveys and naval activities, and potential disturbance from increasing ecotourism and coastal development.



Plastic pollution is a significant and an on-going threat to whales (and all other sea creatures) off our coasts through ingestion and entanglement, as they can mistake plastic for food and get trapped in plastic debris. Whales are


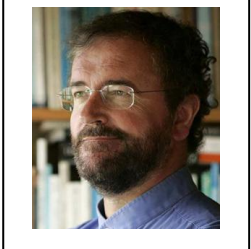


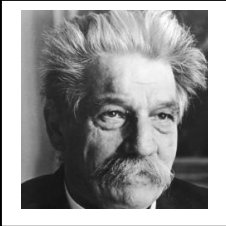

vulnerable because they can accidentally ingest plastic bags, which obstruct their digestive systems and can lead to starvation. Additionally, abandoned fishing nets, known as "ghost gear," pose a severe risk of entanglement, causing injury and death.



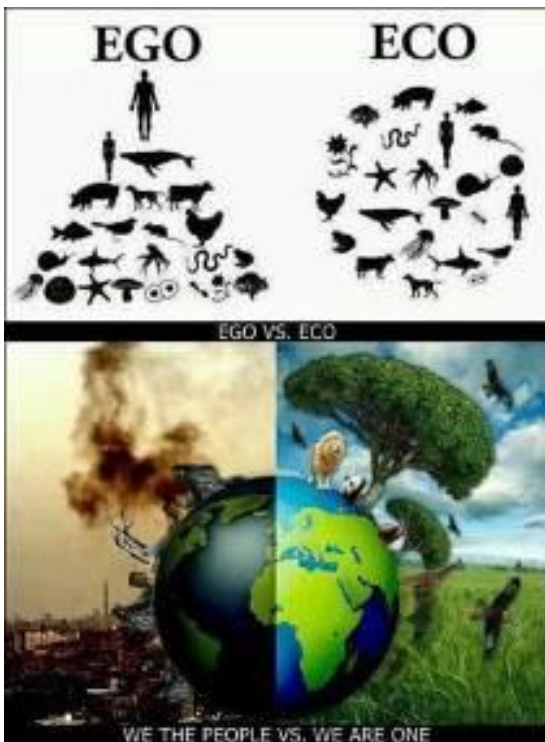
		<p>While we in Gauteng don't have control over abandoned fishing gear, we can mitigate plastic pollution by ensuring that we dispose of our plastic waste meticulously and responsibly. We may think that that carelessly tossed plastic packet won't leave the landfill, but wind and rain may have other ideas.</p> <p><b><i>Paying heed to the biggest animals on the planet is what World Whale Day is all about. So get ready to celebrate World Whale Day being mindful of our wider environmental footprint!</i></b></p>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>15</b>	<p>All powerful God, you are present in the universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists. Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty. Fill us with your peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one.</p> <p><b><i>A prayer for our earth - Pope Francis' Encyclical, Laudato Si'</i></b></p>
<b>Monday</b>	<b>16</b>	<p><b>World Hippo Day (15 February)</b></p> <p>World Hippo Day reminds us to celebrate and value these mud-loving mammals, in the hope that they'll be around for many more years to come, so let's take the time to acknowledge and admire one of four, mega-herbivores, the Hippo (<i>Hippopotamus amphibious</i>).</p>  <p>World Hippo Day is not only a celebration of these majestic river giants but also a call to action. By recognising their beauty, ecological importance, and the threats they face, we can all play a part in ensuring that hippos continue to thrive for generations to come.</p> <p>Currently listed as <i>Vulnerable</i> on the IUCN Red List, hippo populations have been decreasing as their habitats shrink. The cumulative threats of climate change, drought, habitat loss and the unregulated trade in their teeth and meat are major threats to them. Human overpopulation also leads to encroachment on hippo habitats causing human-wildlife conflict. Hippos have attacked and killed people, which in turn leads to the retaliatory killing of the hippos.</p> <p><b><i>Pray for the many challenges these magnificent beasts face.</i></b></p>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>17</b>	<p>Forgiving parent to all creation, your mercy is boundless. We squander the inheritance of this earth as mere commodity to be bought and sold for our comfort and entertainment. We refuse to share its bounty with our brothers and sisters in the great family of creation. Yet you welcome us home, and invite us to celebrate the feast of your new creation with all your children: those who swim beneath the waves of the sea and those who live in its soil; the children of the flowers in the meadows and the trees in the forest; all the children who roam over the land and the winged ones who fly with the winds; and yes, your human children too.</p>

<p><b>Wednesday</b></p>	<p><b>18</b></p>	<p><b>Ash Wednesday</b></p> <p>From a biblical perspective, the phrase "we are stardust" is seen as a poetic and scientifically accurate way to describe how humans are made from the "dust" of the earth, a dust that originated from the universe's creation. The Bible's account in Genesis, where God forms humanity from the dust and breathes life into them, is harmonized with the scientific understanding that the elements making up the earth and human bodies were forged in stars and are therefore literally "stardust". This perspective highlights a deep connection between humanity, the Earth, and the cosmos, all originating from a single divine creative act.</p> <p>The phrase "we are stardust" is a scientific and poetic way to say that the elements in our bodies were forged inside stars. The hydrogen and helium in the early universe were created during the Big Bang, but heavier elements like carbon, oxygen, and iron were created through nuclear fusion in stars. When massive stars exploded as supernovae, they scattered these elements into space, which eventual</p> <p><b><i>"Dust you are and to dust you will return" - Genesis 3:19</i></b> – this emphasizes the cyclical nature of life and the connection to the earth, which itself is made of stardust.</p> 
<p><b>Thursday</b></p>	<p><b>19</b></p>	<p><b>Carbon Fast for Lent</b></p> <p>A <b>Carbon Fast for Lent</b> is a Lenten challenge to reduce your ecological footprint, reflecting on stewardship of God's creation by giving up or cutting back on carbon-intensive activities (like driving, eating meat, using electricity) from Ash Wednesday to Easter, focusing on sustainable living and spiritual transformation. It's about developing greener habits through small, intentional changes.</p> <p><b><i>Prayerfully decide on what your actions will be.</i></b></p>
<p><b>Friday</b></p>	<p><b>20</b></p>	 <p><b>SOME SEASONS ARE FOR ROOTS NOT FRUIT</b></p>

<p><b>Saturday</b></p>	<p><b>21</b></p>	<p><b>World Pangolin Day</b></p> <p>Each year on World Pangolin Day, conservationists of the world come together to celebrate pangolins. These fascinating scale-covered mammals are the world’s most trafficked animals, yet most people have never seen one in the wild.</p> <p>Pangolins play a vital role in their ecosystem, helping to control insect populations (mainly ants and termites) but they face the constant threat of poaching and habitat loss.</p> <p>On this day, we need to raise awareness and stand together to protect these gentle creatures. Conservation starts with education.</p> <p>Let’s spread the word and help ensure a future where pangolins thrive in the wild. Learn more about these special and curious little creatures, support conservation efforts and be a voice for the pangolins.</p> <p><b><i>Pray for the many challenges these enigmatic creatures face</i></b></p>	
<p><b>Sunday</b></p>	<p><b>22</b></p>	<p>O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes. Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction. Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth.</p> <p><b><i>A prayer for our earth - Pope Francis’ Encyclical, Laudato Si’</i></b></p>	
<p><b>Monday</b></p>	<p><b>23</b></p>	<p>“The world rests in the night. Trees, mountains, fields, and faces are released from the prison of shape and the burden of exposure. Each thing creeps back into its own nature within the shelter of the dark. Darkness is the ancient womb. Nighttime is womb- time. Our souls come out to play. The darkness absolves everything; the struggle for identity and impression falls away. We rest in the night.”</p> <p><b><i>John O'Donohue</i></b> <i>Priest, Author &amp; Irish Poet .</i></p>	
<p><b>Tuesday</b></p>	<p><b>24</b></p>	<p>Father of Creation, God of Grace, We thank you for the gift of this world. For beauty, For the gift of life and love Father of Creation, God of Grace, We thank you for the stunning diversity found within creation. Mountains, streams and the changing of the seasons. You declared it to be good, and it is good. It is beautiful.</p> <p><b><i>Jon Swales</i></b> <i>Taken from prayer “Diversity and Endlings”.</i></p>	

<p>Wednesday</p>	<p>25</p>	<p><b>Encyclical Letter <i>Fratelli Tutti</i> of Pope Francis on the Fraternity and Social Friendship</b></p> <p><b>Chapter Four</b></p> <p><b><i>Starting with our own region</i></b></p> <p>151. Thanks to regional exchanges, by which poorer countries become open to the wider world, universality does not necessarily water down their distinct features. An appropriate and authentic openness to the world presupposes the capacity to be open to one’s neighbour within a family of nations. Cultural, economic and political integration with neighbouring peoples should therefore be accompanied by a process of education that promotes the value of love for one’s neighbour, the first indispensable step towards attaining a healthy universal integration.</p> <p>152. In some areas of our cities, there is still a lively sense of neighbourhood. Each person quite spontaneously perceives a duty to accompany and help his or her neighbour. In places where these community values are maintained, people experience a closeness marked by gratitude, solidarity and reciprocity. The neighbourhood gives them a sense of shared identity.<sup>[131]</sup> Would that neighbouring countries were able to encourage a similar neighbourly spirit between their peoples! Yet the spirit of individualism also affects relations between countries. The danger of thinking that we have to protect ourselves from one another, of viewing others as competitors or dangerous enemies, also affects relations between peoples in the same region. Perhaps we were trained in this kind of fear and mistrust.</p> <p>There are powerful countries and large businesses that profit from this isolation and prefer to negotiate with each country separately. On the other hand, small or poor countries can sign agreements with their regional neighbours that will allow them to negotiate as a bloc and thus avoid being cut off, isolated and dependent on the great powers. Today, no state can ensure the common good of its population if it remains isolated.</p> <p><b><i>Prayerfully consider how this affects our Country.</i></b></p>
<p>Thursday</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>“I knew that a system of values which concerns itself only with our relationship to other people is incomplete and therefore lacking in power for good. Only by means of reverence for life can we establish a spiritual and humane relationship with both people and all living creatures within our reach.”</p> <p><b><i>Albert Schweitzer</i></b></p> 
<p>Friday</p>	<p>27</p>	

<p><b>Saturday</b></p>	<p><b>28</b></p>	<p>Heavenly Father, Creator of all,</p> <p>As this month comes to a close, we lift our hearts to You in gratitude for the beauty and wonder of the creation that surrounds us. We thank you for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The raw materials of the earth and the mystery of life and growth.</li> <li>• The diverse life forms—from the great seas to the forests and prairies—that reflect Your divine glory.</li> <li>• The opportunity to share in Your continuing work of creation through the skills of our hands and minds.</li> </ul> <p>We confess that we have not always been good stewards of our worldly inheritance. We ask for pardon for our misuse and neglect of the Earth, which has led to suffering for many of Your creatures and fellow humans. Help us to repent and change our ways, to make lifestyle choices that are selfless and sustainable, and to promote justice and truth for all.</p> <p>As we enter a new month, grant us the wisdom and strength to care for the Earth as Your gift and our home. Guide us to use our gifts wisely, for the benefit of all humankind, and help us to walk in Your rhythm, reflecting Your love and care in all we do. May we be a source of light and hope, aligned with Your perfect will, and may Your presence be a constant source of comfort and security in the days ahead.</p> <p>We make this prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever.</p> <p>Amen.</p>
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