

SACRED STORY



December 30, 2012

Encouragement & Wisdom

E & W reflections are additional helps for your Sacred Story prayer journey. Reflect on them ahead of your prayer exercises for the week or outside of your fifteen-minute prayer windows during the week.

Creation

The *Sacred Story* of Creation had another beginning four point five billion years ago. Earth came into existence: the densest of eight planets of a small solar system in the Orion Arm on the outer reaches of the Milky Way Galaxy. A rare combination of events enables this beautiful orb to produce complex intelligent life. We are the perfect distance from the center and edge of our galaxy. Our position enables us to escape the center's dangerous radiation and crowding that would disrupt the delicate orbital axis around our star. If we were any further out however, we would be deficient in the heavy metals produced by the supernovas of the galactic center.

As a small planet, we have a dense, unusually large moon that stabilizes the 23° tilt of earth's rotation axis, holding it steady in this position for millions of years. Without the moon as anchor, Jupiter and Saturn would cause a wild orbit, with massive climate changes and an environment hostile to complex life. Without a planet the size of Jupiter, we would be ten thousand times more exposed to the violent strikes of asteroids and meteors that would sterilize the planet, making it unable to sustain life. There has not been one such strike for two point five billion years.

Earth has had two total ice events; one two point five billion years ago and one five hundred and fifty million years ago. The first ice event created conditions for single cell life to expand. The second event, at the time of the Cambrian explosion, conspired to

transform single cell life into complex multi-cellular life. The earth possesses a rare plate tectonics that produces a remarkably stable temperature regulation mechanism, enabling the evolution of complex life.¹

When you pray with Creation in *Sacred Story*, remember that Earth is indeed rare and beautiful. It makes our lives possible. Let the awesomeness of this truth create wonder in your heart. Ponder its meaning. Give thanks.

Pray for each other. Pray for the Church. Pray for the World.

Live Gratitude.

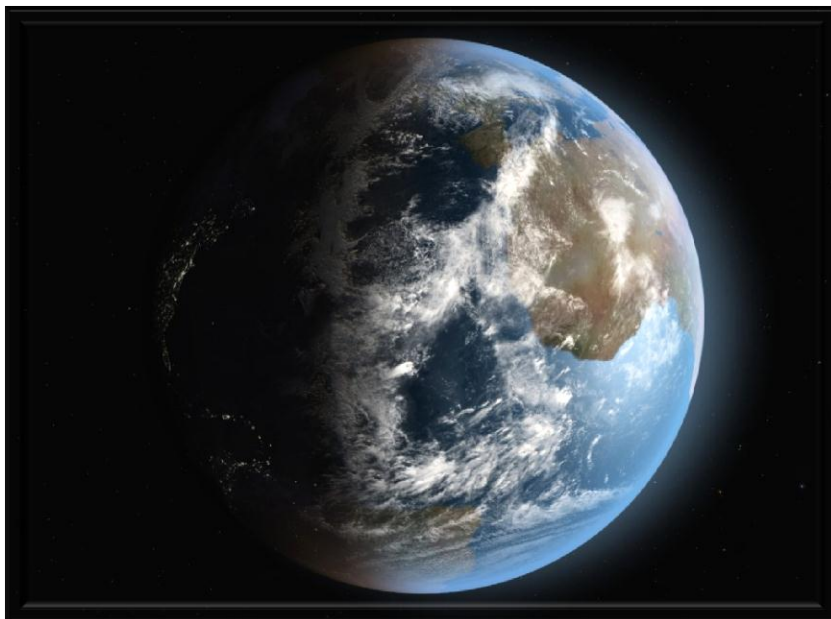
Awaken to Creation, Presence, Memory, Mercy and Eternity.



You fixed the earth on its foundation, so it can never be shaken.

The deeps covered it like a garment; above the mountains stood the waters. You made the moon to mark the seasons; the sun that knows the hour of its setting. You bring darkness and night falls.

(Psalm 104: 5-6; 19-20)



¹ Inspired by: *Rare Earth: Why Complex Life is Uncommon in the Universe*, by Peter Ward and Donald Brownlee. Ward and Brownlee have both taught at the University of Washington.