

## **A Thanksgiving Prayer for Mother Earth**

Rev. Kirk S. Thomas

We who live here in the Columbia Gorge and near the slopes of Mt. Adams and Mt. Hood are incredibly fortunate. Not only do we have the mighty Columbia rolling majestically past us, but water falls from the sky here and snows blanket the mountains, feeding the streams and rivers that flow down to the great river and out to the sea.

Thanks to this plentiful rainfall, our Mother Earth is generous with her bounty. Orchards and vineyards fill our valleys and cover our hills. Organic dairies fill Trout Lake valley, and salmon and trout swim in our rivers and streams.

Flowers bloom everywhere in the spring, and forests of pine, fir, cedar, and oak cover our hills and mountains, providing habitat for wild creatures and wood for our logging industries.

It's so beautiful here that I wonder if we all don't take it a bit for granted.

In Druidry we value reciprocity as a virtue. I give so that you may give. You give so that I may give. It's a two-way street. And Mother Earth gives us so very much. She gives us the land where our plants may grow and our livestock may graze. She gives us the rain and the snow to water our land that all may thrive. She gives us the wood of the forest that we may build our houses. She gives us the fish of the streams that we may eat. She gives us the air that we may breathe.

She gives and gives and gives.

Tonight we are here to give thanks. This is the time of thanksgiving, after all. But since we receive so much, perhaps we need to give back more than just our heartfelt gratitude? Perhaps we should imbue our words with action?

At the great macro-economic scale of things, we could give back by promoting renewable energy over coal, oil, and gas. We could reforest the Amazon Basin since trees take so much carbon out of the air. We could stop denying that Global

Warming and Climate Change are real, and substantially caused by human activities.

But these great issues are bigger than each of us. Short of some great political upheaval they are out of our hands. But what can we as individuals do to give back to Mother Earth?

Many of us are already doing these things. We can compost our organic matter and spread it on the land to make it more fertile. We can continue to recycle as much as possible and cut down on the packaging we buy. Just taking our own shopping bags to the market instead of using their plastic bags means a lot. We can support homeless shelters and food banks for those less fortunate than ourselves that they, too, may partake of the earth's bounty. In our every day decisions we can make a difference, and show our thanks to our Mother Earth.

For Thanksgiving is not just about families and feelings. It is also about doings.

I am very thankful to be able to live where I do, on an organic farm in Trout Lake. I am thankful for the Earth and Nature and all that They give to us. As we Druids say, the Earth is our Mother. She upholds us and supports us. For without the Earth we cannot live.

I pray that we may protect Mother Earth from our own excesses. I pray that we may continue to be supported and upheld by Her. And I pray that She will still be the 'warm, moist earth' for our grandchildren that she has been for us.

For no matter what happens in the future, She will thrive, even if we do not.

So in the weeks and months and years to come, let us all give our thanks for our Mother Earth.

So be it.