

A black and white photograph of a desolate landscape. In the foreground, a large pile of weathered driftwood is scattered across the ground. The background shows a flat, open plain extending to a distant horizon under a cloudy sky. The overall mood is somber and reflective.

**Missa Mundi,
Requies Terrae,
Te Terram,
Stabat Terraque**

John Leonard

© John Leonard 2016

missamundi@gmail.com

Preface

This document contains alternative texts for four of the pieces of the Catholic liturgy most commonly set to music: the Mass, the Requiem, the Te Deum and the Stabat Mater.

There are three purposes served by providing these alternative texts:

- They may be used to replace the words for performances of existing settings of the Mass &c, for example, it would be possible to perform Byrd's *Mass in Five Parts* replacing the traditional words with the Missa Mundi words below, or the Mozart/Süssmayr *Requiem*, using parts of the Requies Terrae text (Havergal Brian's *Gothic Symphony* would make a lot more sense with the words below (Te Terram) used in the final three movements)*;
- They may be used as the texts for new musical compositions;
- They may be read as putative liturgical pieces for a Daoist/Green spirituality.

These piece do not parody the Christian liturgy, they parallel it; in other words I have not gone through and replaced each expression of Christian theology or thought with an alternative philosophical idea, instead I have provided three Daoist/Green texts which coincide in syllable-count, phrase-structure and mood with the Christian pieces. (However, in some parts of the Sequence of the Requiem I have followed the sense of the original text more closely, replacing the idea of the Last Judgement with the more useful one of imminent ecological collapse, and in the Stabat Mater I have provided a text that focuses on the Earth grieving for the destruction of her offspring as a mother-figure parallel to Mary in the Christian text).

Broadly the four pieces each express the same idea: human life is worldly, based in the world, and yet modernity in its

ecological destructiveness is taking away the basis for human life. In the worst case scenario the world for humans will end (ie humans will go extinct). The Requiem in my version (Requies Terrae) becomes a plea for the world itself to be granted rest from human destructiveness, the Te Deum in my version is a hymn of praise for the world (Te Terram), the Stabat Mater a lament for the destruction of life by humanity (Stabat Terra), and the Mass a further expression of these ideas (Missa Mundi).

The provision of these texts is in no way intended to challenge or denigrate the beliefs of Christians. Instead it is designed to provide non-Christians who are concerned about the parlous state of the environment and who would like to see global civilization moving to a genuinely sustainable basis with material to read, sing or hear sung. And if existing musical settings of the Christian liturgy are sung with these texts, so much the better, as the music in many of them is very fine, and if they can be made more relevant in the present with new words this is to the good.

Or, of course, making use of this idea, you could produce your own texts. It would be good to see alternative texts for these pieces in other languages too.

As to copyright, these pieces are © John Leonard 2016. They may be freely used and adapted in non-profit-making contexts, acknowledging authorship. If you use these, or adapt them, please let me know: missamundi@gmail.com.

If you intend to use these texts in a profit-making context then I will need to license their use and will negotiate a fee. Please contact me before making use of the texts on the above email.

* Minor tweaks to the texts will be necessary to suit them to different composers' settings, of course.

Missa Mundi

May we mend (Kyrie)

May we mend the harm done; repair the damage. May we mend the harm done.

Glory (Gloria)

Glory to the world in its richness, may its peace inspire good will in people towards all creatures.

(Laudamus...) We joy in the world, give thanks for the world, delight in all life, have creatures as example. We follow the patterns of nature to find the right ways to live well.

(Domine...) Most glorious world, home of our life, its diversity still unknown— endless renewal each season, each year, abundant life. We will protect you, who give us life, and nurture all life.

(Qui tollis...) You who are our being with all life, may we mend the damage.

You who are our being with all life, help us perceive more clearly the way ahead.

Great home of all and source of wisdom, may we mend the damage.

(Quoniam...) For you are our first daily care, you are inspiration, you are solace and refuge. In you is our only peace, rest and immortality. So it is.

I See (Credo)

I see one world for humans, supplying all our needs, continually renewing its gifts, endowed with every kind of life, most wonderful and varied.

(Et in unum...) I see humanity dwelling in this world, taking

what is needful from its great wealth. I see people in their time, skilled hunters and gatherers, living in their lands, nurturing them in ritual, celebrating all fellow creatures. In the good times prospering, in the bad times enduring, hefted in spirit to the land.

(Qui propter...) I see people in time ploughing the earth, driving herds, and towns, cities springing up. I see them building temples, bowing down to gods, forgetting the world and life. I see people wasting, industry hungry, forests being destroyed, marshlands drained, plains ploughed, rivers dammed. I see wildlife declining. And yet everywhere life persists and inspires hope in the people, that damage can be undone, world made beautiful as before. And in the future I see joyfulness, world in the glory of abundant life again, people rejoicing in their rich lives.

(Et in Spiritum...) And I see in people's lives, both in conscious and unconscious thought, the world inspiring them by the pattern of being, as it always has through art, music and poetry, in song and dance, mood and movement—nature guiding words, melodies, design.

(Et unam sanctam...) I see one purpose for humanity—protecting the world as they would their own. I see one future for humanity, a long continuance in the world. And I see each generation remembered for their care, where life is cherished and enriches. So it is.

Sacred (Sanctus)

Sacred, sacred, sacred, world of wonder teeming with life. Your hills and forests are our joy, your creatures our life.

(Osanna...) Help us now to know our plight.

(Benedictus...) May those people of good will help us prize the precious world.

(Osanna...) Help us now to know our plight.

Beautiful world (Agnus Dei)

Beautiful world, you are our being with all life, may we mend the damage.

Beautiful world, you are our being with all life, may we mend the damage.

Beautiful world, you are our being with all life, may we live in your peace.

Requies Terrae

May the earth (Introit)

May the earth now have rest from human depredations. May we live within earth's means for the long-term.

We respect our world, our home, our parent; from it all life arises, and lives among its kind.

May the earth now have rest from human depredations. May we live within earth's means for the long-term.

May we mend (Kyrie)

May we mend the harm done; repair the damage. May we mend the harm done.

May the earth (Graduale)

May the earth now have rest from human depredations. May we live within earth's means for the long-term.

Those people of goodwill, the wise, they are remembered, their reputations will last down all the ages.

Sequence

(Dies irae...) That terrible day, that fearful day,
When earth is no longer a home,
As poets and scientists have warned.

What terror as we near that point,
With floods, droughts, famines and pestilence—
Nature leaving us without hope.

(Tuba mirum...) Everywhere anger will arise;
The guilty and the innocent
Will suffer equally for this.

Nothing can help us on that day—
For the horrors we will know:
Catastrophe and pure terror.

(Liber scriptus...) Humanity has been forewarned
By scientists and thinkers alike—
No excuse for where we are now.

If earth dies so does humanity,
Every part of human history;
All achievements will perish then.

(Quid sum miser...) What can be said to stop destruction?
We must call out to our instinct,
To teach us to live in the world.

(Rex tremendae...) May great nature be preserved,
And humanity with it too—
It saving us as we save it.

(Recordare...) Remember everything that makes
The world and life so beautiful:
Do not let trees, birds, beasts vanish.
We seek for consolation there,
Let love and nature speak for us—
Human life will never be lost.
Nature will show us our true path,
Allow us to redeem ourselves,
Before utter catastrophe.

(Ingemisco...) I groan to think what has been lost,
I feel guilt for all species lost,
May humanity not be lost.
The thought of all those creatures gone,
And those which are now endangered,
Inspires us to protect all life.
Our words and deeds both must begin
The long path back, or else we die,
No trace of our lives left on earth.
In this hour we must fight endlessly
To separate ourselves from the bad—
The destructive and exploiting.

(Confutatis maledictis...) When the wicked are defeated
When money politics is dead,
Industry without purpose ends.
Then we will have made a difference—
Then the world will flourish for us,
And all its creatures with us still.

(Lacrimosa...) But until then we need to mourn,
Lament the destruction now occurring,
Hope that time has not yet run out.
May our life on earth be preserved,
To last down the centuries.
May the earth have rest from harm. So it is.

May all species be preserved (Offertorium)

May all species be preserved, every last one; may no kind of life go extinct because of human depredations, but be left in peace, living in their habitats. Let the magnificence of the world be saved, not replaced with poor ruined wastelands, barren deserts with no life. People must demand that life be saved, that our children may see the beauty that we see.

The world's promise is to support us and our fellow creatures. (Hostias...) We make this demand of ourselves: preserve life, do not now let it die. It falls to us to sustain life's diversity, and carry it along with us through the ages. Failing this, we are dead, we are lost without our greater part.

The world's promise is to support us and our fellow creatures.

Sacred (Sanctus)

Sacred, sacred, sacred, world of wonder teeming with life. Your hills and forests are our joy, your creatures our life.

(Osanna...) Help us now to know our plight.

(Benedictus...) May those people of good will help us prize the precious world.

Beautiful world (Agnus Dei)

Beautiful world, you are our being with all life, may you now have rest from harm, may you now have rest from harm for all ages.

May the earth (Communio)

May the earth now have rest from harm, from pillage, through millennia; may we love life, and cherish all life. May the earth now have rest from human depredations. May we live within

earth's means for the long-term, through millennia; may we love life, and cherish all life.

Free our dear earth (Libera me)

Free our dear earth from pillage, may the day never come when the world for humans is dead, when it ceases to be a home, a refuge; when fear and anger will turn and deal death to us all. (Tremens factus sum...) I am seized with the greatest trembling and fear, thinking of that time of chaos, collapse, when our society ends; when the world for humans is longer home. That terrible day, that fearful day, calamity and misery on us, day of greatest bitterness, when fear and anger turn and deal death to us.

May the earth now have rest from human depredations. May we live within earth's means for the long-term.

Te Terram

(Te deum laudamus...) We praise you, our world, we acknowledge our only home.

The world gives all life being, all creatures their refuge. All life requires the earth to live: all animals, birds, fish, plants and trees, and humankind.

(Sanctus...) Sacred, sacred, sacred, world of wonder teeming with life. Your hills and forests are our joy, your creatures our life.

We humans know our place in the world by our instincts: Through you come all thoughts, wishes, love and care for others;

All arts, music, dance, poetry and song are yours;

All rites, ceremonies and correct behaviour must belong to you—

(Patrem immensæ...) O world of infinite potential.

Your resources and riches, used wisely, give us comfort,
Shared generously, give comfort to all humans.

(Tu Rex gloriæ...) O precious world, you are joy,
Never-ending and unstinting source of all.

We understand that continued human existence is real
immortality down the ages.

(Tu, devicto...) Death is no longer terrible for us,
Only the thought of human life in the world ending.

(Tu ad dexteram...) But you will support us through all time,
If we care for your life.

Your well-being is constantly in our minds,

Your substance is ours too,

And our measure is how we care.

(Te ergo quæsumus...) Thought of you is comfort, thought of
you is strength and resource,

Whose substance we are, whose being makes up all of our lives.
Make us always mindful of your great magnificence and your
solace.

(Salvum fac...) Oh dear earth, help us fight against wickedness,
ignorance, and money's evil power.

May your calm extend, may all people live quietly under your
governance

And be blessed day by day, season by season.

(Et laudamus...) We celebrate your great generosity, the gifts
for good you give us all.

May your fame, your beauty, keep us from doing wrong by you
or your creatures.

Have mercy upon us, oh dear earth, have mercy upon us.

(Fiat misericordia...) Our trust for life is only in your
protection, oh dear earth, hope for all generations of people.

The world is our only refuge, may humanity not be destroyed.

Stabat Terra

Earth stood weeping for her offspring,
Injured by careless human acts—
Weeping for their undue deaths.

Earth is pierced with mother's sorrow—
Children of hers have proved so cruel,
Ending lives they should protect.

How sad Earth is and afflicted,
To see creation wasted now,
Forests and woods all cut down.

All the world's riches are exhausted,
Earth beholds the sight whilst grieving—
Creatures once common now gone.

Who would not grieve along with her,
Seeing those losses for themselves,
Seeing their world made lesser?

Who would not grieve at devastation,
The loss of all that is to prize,
Life of creatures and of plants?

She sees her heritage despoiled,
With no benefit to pass on,
Humankind harming itself.

She sees her most treasured places
Ravaged of beauty and of life,
With no end to harm in sight.

Alas, Earth, mother of all life!
Make me feel your sharpest sorrow,
Make me mourn along with you!

Make it so my heart is burning
In the knowledge of so much loss,
In pity of so much waste.

Holy Earth, inspire my spirit
To fight against these insane acts,
To fight for a world restored.

Let me share with you your sorrow
For the world we are despoiling,
In the hope to set it right.

Let me sorrow with you and yours
Until nature's sustaining care
Is granted us once again.

I will wait amidst nature's ruins,
Lamenting for them as I should,
But gathering future strength.

Earth the bountiful, my request
Of you is your inspiration
To seek your beauty once more.

Let me, as long as my life lasts,
Oppose the insults offered you,
And honour you as I should.

Let me share the wounds you suffer,
Make me share your deepest sorrow,
Who am a child of Earth.

Shed your blessings on us Mother,
Lest we forget your suffering,
Continue uncaring children.

Nature, when I am gone, may you
Continue your nurturing still,
In every generation.

In earth, while humanity lives,
Make them honour their home and strength—
Their precious environment.

So it is.