Wangari Muta Maathai

1940–2011

A Memorial Ceremony

We will miss her. We will celebrate her. We will emulate her. We will never forget her. She will continue to live in all that is green, that is life, that is true.

Monday November 14 2011 at 4:30 pm

The Cathedral Church of **Saint John the Divine**

The Ceremony

Welcome

The Very Reverend Dr. James A. Kowalski: Dean, Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine

Opening

Wangari Maathai with Paul Winter

For me, I have learned to be inspired by wherever I am, whatever I am doing. It may be music that I am listening to; and it gives me inspiration. Church for me is a very frequent place that I go, usually when they are empty, and I just sit by myself, and reflect. And I usually will reflect on the fact that this is a house where so many people come to seek for solutions for many problems, for solace, for advice, and sometimes I come out of there at peace with myself, especially if I had gone in there because I was feeling unstable, disappointed, down. I will come out, really motivated.

Reading

Fr. Thomas Berry, "The New Story," from *Dream of the Earth;*
Read by Mary Evelyn Tucker, co-founder, Forum on Religion and Ecology

If the dynamics of the universe from the beginning shaped the course of the heavens, lighted the sun, and formed the earth, if this same dynamism brought forth the continents and seas and atmosphere, if it awakened life in the primordial cell and then brought into being the unnumbered variety of living beings, and finally brought us into being and guided us safely through the turbulent centuries, there is reason to believe that this same guiding process is precisely what has awakened in us our present understanding of ourselves and our relation to this stupendous process. Sensitized to such guidance from the very structure and functioning of the universe, we can have confidence in the future that awaits the human venture.

Song

"In the Cool of the Day," words and music by Jean Ritchie; arr. Peter Amidon
The Choir

My Lord, He said unto me:
"Do you like my garden so fair?
You may live in this garden if you keep the grasses green,
And I'll return in the cool of the day."

Now is the cool of the day. Now is the cool of the day.
O this earth is a garden, the garden of my Lord;
And He walks in His garden in the cool of the day.

Then my Lord, He said unto me:
"Do you like my pastures of green?
You may live in this garden if you will feed my lambs;
And I'll return in the cool of the day." *Now is the cool of the day, etc.*

Then my Lord, He said unto me:
"Do you like my garden so free?
You may live in this garden if you keep the people free,
And I'll return in the cool of the day." *Now is the cool of the day, etc.*

Reading

"The Fig Tree and the Tadpoles," by Wangari Maathai, from *Unbowed*
Read by June Zeitlin, former executive director, Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)

When my mother told me to go and fetch firewood, she would warn me, "Don't pick any dry wood out of the fig tree, or even around it." "Why?" I would ask. "Because that's a tree of God," she'd reply. "We don't use it. We don't cut it. We don't burn it." As a child, of course, I had no idea what my mother was talking about, but I obeyed her.

About two hundred yards from the fig tree there was a stream named Kanungu, with water so clean and fresh that we drank it straight from the stream. As a child, I used to visit the point where the water bubbled up from the belly of the earth to form a stream. I imagine that very few people have been lucky enough to see the source of a river. At the point where the stream came out of the ground, were planted arrowroots, and along the stream were banana plants, and sugarcane, which were typical food crops. . . . At that time they were planted all along the banks of the small, slow-flowing streams. Their large, deep green, arching leaves provided a hideaway big enough for a small child such as me to sit underneath. When it rained the silver drops of water would dance on the broad fronds above me and cascade to the ground. We also used these leaves to fetch water from the river and drink it.

Underneath the arrowroots, there would be thousands of frogs' eggs. They were black, brown, and white beads that I thought would make a beautiful necklace. I would spend hours trying to pick them up as gently as I could, hoping that I could put them around my neck. However, each time I placed my fingers below to lift them, the jelly that held them together would break and they would slip through my fingers back into the stream. I was so disappointed!

Time and time again I would return to that stream to play with the frogs' eggs. Suddenly the eggs would disappear and subsequently I would see what seemed to be an army of black tadpoles wriggling in the water. I would try to catch them by their tails but they, too, were elusive. In time these also would disappear and later on I would see many frogs hopping around the area near the stream. However, I never made the connection between the eggs, the tadpoles, and the frogs until I went to school and learned about their life cycle.

In my mind's eye I can envision that stream now: The crystal-clear water washing over the pebbles and grains of soil underneath, silky and slow moving. I can see the life in that water and the shrubs, reeds, and ferns along the banks, swaying as the current of the water sidles around them. When my mother would send me to fetch water, I would get lost in this fascinating world of nature until she would call out, "What are you doing under the arrowroots? Bring the water!"

I later learned that there was a connection between the fig tree's root system and the underground water reservoirs. The roots burrowed deep into the ground, breaking through the rocks beneath the surface soil and diving into the underground water table. The water traveled up along the roots until it hit a depression or weak place in the ground and gushed out as a spring. Indeed, wherever these trees stood, there were likely to be streams. The reverence the community had for the fig tree helped preserve the stream and the tadpoles that so captivated me. The trees also held the soil together, reducing erosion and landslides. In such ways, without a conscious effort, these cultural and spiritual practices contributed to the conservation of biodiversity.

Song

"We Have a Beautiful Mother," words by Alice Walker; music by Mihoko Suzuki
The Choir

We have a beautiful
mother
Her hills
are buffaloes
Her buffaloes
hills.

We have a beautiful
Mother
Her oceans
are wombs
Her wombs
oceans.

We have a beautiful
mother
Her teeth
the white stones
at the edge
of the water
the summer
grasses
her plentiful
hair.

We have a beautiful
mother
Her green lap
immense
Her brown embrace
eternal
Her blue body
everything we know.

Reading

"When Great Trees Fall," by Maya Angelou
Read by Frances Moore Lappé, co-founder, Small Planet Institute

When great trees fall,
rocks on distant hills shudder,
lions hunker down
in tall grasses,
and even elephants
lumber after safety.

When great trees fall
in forests,
small things recoil into silence,
their senses
eroded beyond fear.
When great souls die,
the air around us becomes
light, rare, sterile.
We breathe, briefly.
Our eyes, briefly,
see with
a hurtful clarity.
Our memory, suddenly sharpened,
examines,
gnaws on kind words
unsaid,
promised walks
never taken.
Great souls die and
our reality, bound to
them, takes leave of us.
Our souls,
dependent upon their
nurture,
now shrink, wizened.
Our minds, formed
and informed by their
radiance,
fall away.
We are not so much maddened
as reduced to the unutterable ignorance
of dark, cold
caves.
And when great souls die,
after a period peace blooms,
slowly and always
irregularly. Spaces fill
with a kind of
soothing electric vibration.
Our senses, restored, never
to be the same, whisper to us.
They existed. They existed.
We can be. Be and be
better. For they existed.

Song

"Hakuna Mungu Kama Yeh Yeh," traditional Kiswahili hymn, sung by Green Belt Movement women while planting trees; arr. by Andy Davis
The Choir

Hakuna mungu kama yeh yeh
Hakuna updendo kama wakeh
Hakuna nguvu kama zakeh

There is no God like Him.
There is no love like His
There is no strength like His.

Reading

"Foresters without Diplomas," by Wangari Maathai, from *Unbowed*
Read by Peg Snyder, first grantor of GBM; GBM US board member

We organized meetings where foresters talked to the women about how to run their own nurseries. But these were difficult encounters. The foresters didn't understand why I was trying to teach rural women how to plant trees. "You need a professional," they told me. "You need a diploma to plant trees." They then told the women about the gradient of the land and the entry point of the sun's rays, the depth of the seedbed, the content of the gravel, the type of soil, and all the specialized tools and inputs needed to run a successful tree nursery. Naturally, this was more than the women, nearly all of whom were poor and illiterate, could handle.

What the foresters were saying didn't seem right to me. You might need a diploma to understand a tree's growth and what the content of the seedling was, but I didn't believe the women needed all the technical knowledge the

foresters were dispensing to plant trees successfully. All they needed to know was how to put the seedling in the soil and help it grow, and that didn't seem too hard. Anybody can dig a hole, put a tree in it, water it, and nurture it.

In any case, these women were farmers. They were putting things in the ground and watching them grow all the time. Like them, I too had seen and planted seeds ever since I was a child. So I advised the women to look at the seedlings in a different way. "I don't think you need a diploma to plant a tree," I told them. "Use your woman sense. These tree seedlings are very much like the seeds you deal with, beans and maize and millet, every day. Put them in the soil. If they're good, they'll germinate. If they're not, they won't. Simple."

And this is what they did. The good ones germinated and the bad ones didn't, and the ones that did looked exactly like the trees planted by the foresters! This showed us we were on the right track. We also gave the women plastic bags to retain the soil around the seedlings as they grew and were transplanted. Soon the women started showing one another, and before we knew it tree nurseries were springing up on farms and public land around the country. These women were our "foresters without diplomas."

Please Stand

Song

"Simple Gifts," comp. Joseph Brackett; arr. by Peter Amidon
Everyone

'Tis the gift to be simple, 'tis the gift to be free
'Tis the gift to come down where we ought to be,
And when we find ourselves in the place just right,
'Twill be in the valley of love and delight.
When true simplicity is gain'd,
To bow and to bend we shan't be asham'd,
To turn, turn will be our delight,
Till by turning, turning we come 'round right. *Repeat.*

Please Sit

Reading

Psalm 23, in Kikuyu, Wangari Maathai's native language
Read by Ngoima Wamwaura, member of Forum for the Restoration of Democracy (Kenya)

Jehova nĩwe mũrĩithi wakwa; ndirĩ kĩndũ ingĩkĩaga.
Atũmaga njarehe cieni-inĩ iria ii nyeki nduru;
andĩithagia ngurumo ya maĩ o marĩa me na ũhurũko.
Nĩ kũriũkia ariũkagia ngoro yakwa,
akandongoria na njĩra cia ũthingu nĩ ũndũ wa rĩĩtwa rĩake.
O na ingĩtuĩka ndĩrahungurĩra mũkuru wĩ nduma ta ya gĩkuũ,
ndirĩ ũgwati ingĩĩtgĩra, nĩ gũkorũo twĩ hamwe nawe;
thiarĩ waku na mũthĩgi, nĩcio igũtũma 'makũke.
Ũnjarĩire metha harĩa ndĩ, o ũthiũ-inĩ wa thũ ciakwa;
nĩũnjitĩrĩirie maguta mũtwe; gĩkombe gĩakwa nakĩo nĩkĩembembaine.
Matukũ mothe ma muoyo wakwa, wega na ũtugi itirĩ hingo itarĩrũ-managĩrĩra na niĩ,
na ngũtũũra nyũmba ya Jehova matukũ matarĩ mũthia.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
he leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul:
he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;
thy rod and they staff they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:
thou anointest my head with oil;
my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Song

"Ubi Caritas," antiphon for Maunday Thursday (Holy Thursday); arr. Maurice Duruflé
The Choir

Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est. Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor. Exultemus, et in ipso jucundemur. Timeamus, et amemus Deum vivum. Et ex corde diligamus nos sincero. Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est. Amen.

Where charity and love are, God is there. Christ's love has gathered us into one. Let us rejoice and be pleased in Him. Let us fear, and let us love the living God. And may we love each other with a sincere heart. Where charity and love are, God is there. Amen.

Reading

"Service," by Wangari Maathai, from *Replenishing the Earth*
Read by Mia MacDonald, founder, Brighter Green; GBM US board member

We all have a need to feel at ease and in harmony with ourselves and the environment we live within. Many of us discover that it isn't material things that provide this. In my own life, I have observed that well-being and satisfaction are achieved through compassion, the giving of oneself, serving others, and sharing. We aren't material beings; we are filled with spirit. . . . Kikuyus used a gourd, in which they carried porridge or beer, as an offering or gift. Whoever received the gourd would polish it with oil before returning it. Over time, the gourd would become beautifully varnished by this repeated polishing. The deeper the color of the gourd, the more generous you had been—and the more connected you remained to the world around you. . . .

These gestures of giving capture both the spiritual and the practical elements of gratitude and respect for resources. Our connections to the planet and each other are reinforced simultaneously. The spirit of not wasting, because we assign value to something, is found in many traditions, but not often expressed. We could benefit from spending more time polishing our gourds for each other.

Song

"The Beatitudes," words based on Matthew 5:3–9; music by Peter Amidon
The Choir

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for heaven is theirs.
Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.
Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
Blessed they who hunger after justice, for they shall be filled.
Blessed are the merciful, for they shall have mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.

Reading

"The Hummingbird," by Wangari Maathai, adapted from *Replenishing the Earth*
Read by Athena and Sophia Washburn

An enormous fire breaks out in a huge forest.
All the animals are transfixed as they watch the forest burning.

They feel overwhelmed and powerless, except for a little hummingbird.

It says, "I'm going to do something about the fire."

So it flies to the nearest stream, and takes a drop of water and puts it on the fire.

Up and down, up and down, it goes, as fast as it can.

In the meantime, all the other, much bigger animals—like the elephant, with the big trunk, which could bring much more water, and the lion, the leopard, and giraffe—are standing there, helpless.

They say to the hummingbird, "What do you think you can do? Your wings are too little and your beak is too small, and the forest fire is so huge. You can only bring a small drop of water at a time."

Without wasting any time, the hummingbird tells them.

"Well, I'm doing the best I can!"

Song

"The Blue Green Hills of Earth," words and music by Kim Oler; choral setting by Paul Halley

The Choir

For the earth, forever turning,
For the skies, for every sea,
To our Lord we sing, returning home
To our blue green hills of earth

For the mountains, hills, and pastures,
In their silent majesty,
For all life, for all of Nature,
Sing we our joyful praise to Thee.

For the sun, for rain and thunder,
For the land that makes us free,
For the star, for all the heavens,
Sing we our joyful praise to Thee.

Reading

"We Are All a Part of Nature," by Wangari Maathai, adapted from an interview

Read by Peggy Shepard, founder of WE ACT for Environmental Justice (WEACT)

We are all part of nature. I remember something somebody said (it's not my idea) that, except for our energies, which could be the soul, our bodies have sometimes been the trees, the water, or the animals. We don't know what we have been in the past. We are all part of each other; we kind of get recycled. So when we come down to the primary elements, there is actually no difference. When we get into our various species, we look different, but we are still comprised of the same elements. For me, because we really don't understand where did we come from, where we are going, what the purpose of all this is, we look at the trees and the animals and we look at each other. We conclude that there is a pattern that we are very much a part of but that we really don't control. I'm very aware that I cannot live without the green trees. I'm humbled by the understanding that they can do very well without me! I'm also humbled by the fact that they sustain me, and not the other way around.

Please Stand

Song

"A Song of Peace," music by Jean Sibelius; words by Lloyd Stone

Everyone

This is my song, O God of all the nations,
A song of peace for lands afar and mine;
This is my home, the country where my heart is;
Here are my hopes, my dreams, my holy shrine:
But other hearts in other lands are beating
With hopes and dreams as true and high as mine.

My country's skies are bluer than the ocean,
And sunlight streams on cloverleaf and pine;
But other lands have sunlight too, and clover,
And skies are everywhere as blue as mine:
O hear my song, thou God of all the nations,
A song of peace for their land and for mine.

Please Sit

Valedictory

H. E. Macharia Kamau, Ambassador & Permanent Representative at Kenya Mission to United Nations

Prof. Wangari Maathai was a champion of peace, equality, democracy, and the rights of women. She spoke for the voiceless, the oppressed, and the dispossessed. She spoke truth to power in ways in which those in power had no choice but to listen.

The world came to know her as the protector of forests and all that lies therein: the millions who call forest habitats their home, and by extension the animals, the birds, all creatures, great and small.

In the context of the global debate on environment, climate change, and biodiversity, her message rang loud and true. She reminded us time and again that our forests are indeed the nurturers of our biodiversity and the forests are the lungs which help our earth breathe, as well as regulate its climate. The forests are life itself. Prof. Wangari Maathai was convinced of this and preached the message to the world.

If Mother Earth, if life itself, had a friend and protector—a Florence Nightingale, a Joan of Arc—it was Wangari Maathai: philosopher, environmentalist, educationist, political activist, freedom fighter, mother, grandmother, guiding light.

We in Kenya knew her and experienced her in all her manifestations. As a nation, we were intimate with her. She spoke out for us. She took a beating for us. She was our beacon of hope, sanity, and political transformation. She was our shield and defender in the face of dictates from men in power and in conspiracy.

To the world she was the champion of forests, the voice and protector of everything that is green, that is life, that is true.

She was our pride, our genius, our Nobel laureate. She was Wangari, Wangari: the matriarchal name of the Gikuyu lineage of the warriors, the protectors of the people.

We will miss her. We will celebrate her. We will emulate her. We will never forget her. She will continue to live in all that is green, that is life, that is true.

Peace be upon her wherever she is. And may her family find courage and strength in this time.

Thank you all for coming and God bless.

Closing

"I Like to Go to Rivers."

Wangari Maathai with Paul Winter

I like to go to rivers. I love rivers and streams and to go to an edge of the river and see the river flow. I can almost cry, when I see a river flow. I think of the fact that that river has been flowing for how long, and where will those waters go, and where will they end. And when will they come again and be recycled again, and run through that same place.

Exit

Wangari Muta Maathai's Nobel Lecture, December 10, 2004

Your Majesties, Your Royal Highnesses, Honourable Members of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I stand before you and the world humbled by this recognition and uplifted by the honour of being the 2004 Nobel Peace Laureate.

As the first African woman to receive this prize, I accept it on behalf of the people of Kenya and Africa, and indeed the world. I am especially mindful of women and the girl child. I hope it will encourage them to raise their voices and take more space for leadership. I know the honour also gives a deep sense of pride to our men, both old and young. As a mother, I appreciate the inspiration this brings to the youth and urge them to use it to pursue their dreams.

Although this prize comes to me, it acknowledges the work of countless individuals and groups across the globe. They work quietly and often without recognition to protect the environment, promote democracy, defend human

rights and ensure equality between women and men. By so doing, they plant seeds of peace. I know they, too, are proud today. To all who feel represented by this prize I say use it to advance your mission and meet the high expectations the world will place on us.

This honour is also for my family, friends, partners and supporters throughout the world. All of them helped shape the vision and sustain our work, which was often accomplished under hostile conditions. I am also grateful to the people of Kenya—who remained stubbornly hopeful that democracy could be realized and their environment managed sustainably. Because of this support, I am here today to accept this great honour.

I am immensely privileged to join my fellow African Peace laureates, Presidents Nelson Mandela and F.W. de Klerk, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the late Chief Albert Luthuli, the late Anwar el-Sadat and the UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan.

Photo: Mainichi Corporation, 2005

I know that African people everywhere are encouraged by this news. My fellow Africans, as we embrace this recognition, let us use it to intensify our commitment to our people, to reduce conflicts and poverty and thereby improve their quality of life. Let us embrace democratic governance, protect human rights and protect our environment. I am confident that we shall rise to the occasion. I have always believed that solutions to most of our problems must come from us.

In this year's prize, the Norwegian Nobel Committee has placed the critical issue of environment and its linkage to democracy and peace before the world. For their visionary action, I am profoundly grateful. Recognizing that sustainable development, democracy and peace are indivisible is an idea whose time has come. Our work over the past 30 years has always appreciated and engaged these linkages.

My inspiration partly comes from my childhood experiences and observations of Nature in rural Kenya. It has been influenced and nurtured by the formal education I was privileged to receive in Kenya, the United States and Germany. As I was growing up, I witnessed forests being cleared and replaced by commercial plantations, which destroyed local biodiversity and the capacity of the forests to conserve water.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

In 1977, when we started the Green Belt Movement, I was partly responding to needs identified by rural women, namely lack of firewood, clean drinking water, balanced diets, shelter and income.

Throughout Africa, women are the primary caretakers, holding significant responsibility for tilling the land and feeding their families. As a result, they are often the first to become aware of environmental damage as resources become scarce and incapable of sustaining their families.

The women we worked with recounted that unlike in the past, they were unable to meet their basic needs. This was due to the degradation of their immediate environment as well as the introduction of commercial farming, which replaced the growing of household food crops. But international trade controlled the price of the exports from these small-scale farmers and a reasonable and just income could not be guaranteed. I came to understand that when the environment is destroyed, plundered or mismanaged, we undermine our quality of life and that of future generations.

Tree planting became a natural choice to address some of the initial basic needs identified by women. Also, tree planting is simple, attainable and guarantees quick, successful results within a reasonable amount time. This sustains interest and commitment.

So, together, we have planted over 30 million trees that provide fuel, food, shelter, and income to support their children's education and household needs. The activity also creates employment and improves soils and watersheds. Through their involvement, women gain some degree of power over their lives, especially their social and economic position and relevance in the family. This work continues.

Initially, the work was difficult because historically our people have been persuaded to believe that because they are poor, they lack not only capital, but also knowledge

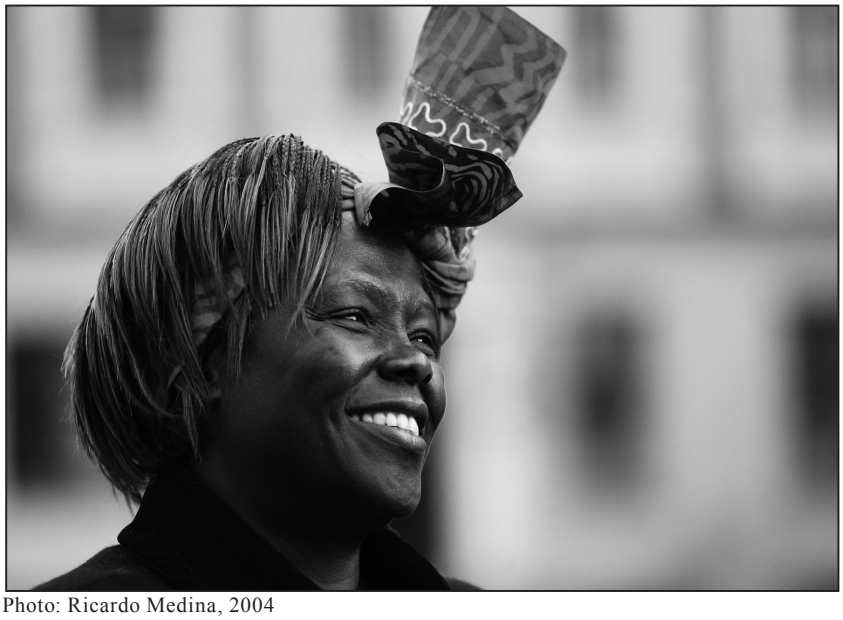

Photo: Ricardo Medina, 2004

and skills to address their challenges. Instead they are conditioned to believe that solutions to their problems must come from 'outside'. Further, women did not realize that meeting their needs depended on their environment being healthy and well managed. They were also unaware that a degraded environment leads to a scramble for scarce resources and may culminate in poverty and even conflict. They were also unaware of the injustices of international economic arrangements.

In order to assist communities to understand these linkages, we developed a citizen education program, during which people identify their problems, the causes and possible solutions. They then make connections between their own personal actions and the problems they witness in the environment and in society. They learn that our world is confronted with a litany of woes: corruption, violence against women and children, disruption and breakdown of families, and disintegration of cultures and communities. They also identify the abuse of drugs and chemical substances, especially among young people. There are also devastating diseases that are defying cures or occurring in epidemic proportions. Of particular concern are HIV/AIDS, malaria and diseases associated with malnutrition.

On the environment front, they are exposed to many human activities that are devastating to the environment and societies. These include widespread destruction of ecosystems, especially through deforestation, climatic instability, and contamination in the soils and waters that all contribute to excruciating poverty.

In the process, the participants discover that they must be part of the solutions. They realize their hidden potential and are empowered to overcome inertia and take action. They come to recognize that they are the primary custodians and beneficiaries of the environment that sustains them.

Entire communities also come to understand that while it is necessary to hold their governments accountable, it is equally important that in their own relationships with each other, they exemplify the leadership values they wish to see in their own leaders, namely justice, integrity and trust.

Although initially the Green Belt Movement's tree planting activities did not address issues of democracy and peace, it soon became clear that responsible governance of the environment was impossible without democratic space. Therefore, the tree became a symbol for the democratic struggle in Kenya. Citizens were mobilised to challenge widespread abuses of power, corruption and environmental mismanagement. In Nairobi 's Uhuru Park, at Freedom Corner, and in many parts of the country, trees of peace were planted to demand the release of prisoners of conscience and a peaceful transition to democracy.

Through the Green Belt Movement, thousands of ordinary citizens were mobilized and empowered to take action and effect change. They learned to overcome fear and a sense of helplessness and moved to defend democratic rights.

In time, the tree also became a symbol for peace and conflict resolution, especially during ethnic conflicts in Kenya when the Green Belt Movement used peace trees to reconcile disputing communities. During the ongoing re-writing of the Kenyan constitution, similar trees of peace were planted in many parts of the country to promote a culture of peace. Using trees as a symbol of peace is in keeping with a widespread African tradition. For example, the elders of the Kikuyu carried a staff from the *thigi* tree that, when placed between two disputing sides, caused them to stop fighting and seek reconciliation. Many communities in Africa have these traditions.

Such practises are part of an extensive cultural heritage, which contributes both to the conservation of habitats and to cultures of peace. With the destruction of these cultures and the introduction of new values, local biodiversity is no longer valued or protected and as a result, it is quickly degraded and disappears. For this reason, The Green Belt Movement explores the concept of cultural biodiversity, especially with respect to indigenous seeds and medicinal plants.

As we progressively understood the causes of environmental degradation, we saw the need for good governance. Indeed, the state of any county's environment is a reflection of the kind of governance

in place, and without good governance there can be no peace. Many countries, which have poor governance systems, are also likely to have conflicts and poor laws protecting the environment.

In 2002, the courage, resilience, patience and commitment of members of the Green Belt Movement, other civil society organizations, and the Kenyan public culminated in the peaceful transition to a democratic government and laid the foundation for a more stable society.

Excellencies, Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is 30 years since we started this work. Activities that devastate the environment and societies continue unabated. Today we are faced with a challenge that calls for a shift in our thinking, so that humanity stops threatening its life-support system. We are called to assist the Earth to heal her wounds and in the process heal our own—indeed, to embrace the whole creation in all its diversity, beauty and wonder. This will happen if we see the need to revive our sense of belonging to a larger family of life, with which we have shared our evolutionary process.

In the course of history, there comes a time when humanity is called to shift to a new level of consciousness, to reach a higher moral ground. A time when we have to shed our fear and give hope to each other.

That time is now.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee has challenged the world to broaden the understanding of peace: there can be no peace without equitable development; and there can be no development without sustainable management of the environment in a democratic and peaceful space. This shift is an idea whose time has come.

I call on leaders, especially from Africa, to expand democratic space and build fair and just societies that allow the creativity and energy of their citizens to flourish.

Those of us who have been privileged to receive education, skills, and experiences and even power must be role models for the next generation of leadership. In this regard, I would also like to appeal for the freedom of my fellow laureate Aung San Suu Kyi so that she can continue her work for peace and democracy for the people of Burma and the world at large.

Culture plays a central role in the political, economic and social life of communities. Indeed, culture may be the missing link in the development of Africa. Culture is dynamic and evolves over time, consciously discarding retrogressive traditions, like female genital mutilation (FGM), and embracing aspects that are good and useful.

Africans, especially, should re-discover positive aspects of their culture. In accepting them, they would give themselves a sense of belonging, identity and self-confidence.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

There is also need to galvanize civil society and grassroots movements to catalyse change. I call upon governments to recognize the role of these social movements in building a critical mass of responsible citizens, who help maintain checks and balances in society. On their part, civil society should embrace not only their rights but also their responsibilities.

Further, industry and global institutions must appreciate that ensuring economic justice, equity and ecological integrity are of greater value than profits at any cost.

The extreme global inequities and prevailing consumption patterns continue at the expense of the environment and peaceful co-existence. The choice is ours.

I would like to call on young people to commit themselves to activities that contribute toward achieving their long-term dreams. They have the energy and creativity to shape a sustainable future. To the young people I say, you are a gift to your communities and indeed the world. You are our hope and our future.

The holistic approach to development, as exemplified by the Green Belt Movement, could be embraced and replicated in more parts of Africa and beyond. It is for this reason that I have established the Wangari Maathai Foundation to ensure the continuation and expansion of these activities. Although a lot has been achieved, much remains to be done.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I conclude I reflect on my childhood experience when I would visit a stream next to our home to fetch water for my mother. I would drink water straight from the stream. Playing among the arrowroot leaves I tried in vain to pick up the strands of frogs' eggs, believing they were beads. But every time I put my little fingers under them they would break. Later, I saw thousands of tadpoles: black, energetic and wriggling through the clear water against the background of the brown earth. This is the world I inherited from my parents.

Today, over 50 years later, the stream has dried up, women walk long distances for water, which is not always clean, and children will never know what they have lost. The challenge is to restore the home of the tadpoles and give back to our children a world of beauty and wonder.

Thank you very much.

The Wangari Muta Maathai Memorial

Kent Tritle, *Director of Cathedral Music*

The Choir of Musica Sacra

Hai-Ting Chin, *Mezzo-Soprano, Tenor, Baritone*

The Choir of the Guilford Community Church (Lise Sparrow, *Pastor*), and the Greater Brattleboro, Vermont, Community, *Director*, Peter Amidon

Mary Alice Amidon, *Banjo*

Nancianne Parrella, *Organ*

Mihoko Suzuki, *Piano*

Paul Winter, *Saxophone*

Tim Cramer, *Sound*

Alan Dater, *Video*

Ken Williams, *Production Manager*

Cover: *Photo:* Brigitte Lacombe. Hummingbird design: Hanaakari

Back cover photo: Martin Rowe

Donations can be made online at the Green Belt Movement website: <greenbeltmovement.org> or by check to the Green Belt Movement—US Office, 1666 K Street, NW, Suite 440, Washington, DC 20006, Phone: +1 (202) 457-8080.

the green belt movement

The Cathedral cordially invites you to visit "The Value of Water," on view at the Cathedral until March 25, 2012. "The Value of Water" is a vast exhibition of over forty separate installations that encompass a range of programs, including art, liturgy, poetry, music, drama, conversations, and storytelling. 1047 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, NY 10025, <stjohndivine.org>.

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The Cathedral Church of **Saint John the Divine**