

Illuminating the Mission

Day One • Page One: A Reflection on Creation

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In this illumination Donald Jackson, artist and calligrapher, dares to illuminate that which leaves us speechless. Seven days of creation, choreographed by God: heavens and earth, sea and sky, birds and beasts. With eyes of faith, a new 'world view' emerges. Chaos turns into order. God calls forth light from darkness; and then breathes life into human kind. In this first panel we see a sliver of gold shining in the center of darkness and chaos. It explodes outward as if driven by a powerful force that wrestles the remaining days into order with God hallowing the seventh day. These seven days, hinged with gold, open the doors of a greater mystery that rest in silence on the horizon. Silence is golden. Entering the seventh day requires courage to enter the silence as the Unspeakable shows itself as the thread of light that holds the web of life together.

While this illumination appears to be a well-oiled machine, brought out of chaos and hinged together by God, it is not. It does not run on its own! It has been ruptured by sin. Pope Francis in his Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* suggests that human life is hinged on three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbor, and with the earth itself. He writes, "The harmony between the Creator, humanity and creation as a whole was disrupted by our presuming to take the place of God and refusing to acknowledge our creaturely limitations. This in turn distorted our mandate to 'have dominion' over the earth (cf. Gen 1:28), to 'till and keep it' (Gen 2:15)...our sin is manifest in all its destructive power in wars, violence and abuse, the abandonment of the most vulnerable, and attacks on nature" (66).

On the sixth day God looked at everything and saw it was *very good*. God wanted us to revel in the Garden and in love. Woven into the sixth day of this illumination is Chris Tomlin's coral snake leading us away from resting in God symbolized by the figures turning their backs away from the light.

We live in a world where constant activity is the norm. We run from one event to another, arriving at a new place before our minds and hearts are able to let go of what we were doing or where we were. We pass through life and do not allow ourselves to experience deeply or be touched by people. We are in need of soul-searching. We must learn again love, compassion and honor so that we might heal the earth. How might you be held in the light? Restore harmony to creation?