

# Renewing the Earth

By Susan Vogt

In the northern hemisphere, Easter conveniently coincides with the renewal of the earth. This is the time when many turn their thoughts to the annual ritual of planting. Even if you are not a gardener, let this season remind you of new life. Just as Christ rose to new life, so we can participate in the new life of the natural world surrounding us.



## For

Couple / Adult

## Season

Spring

## Needed

Dirt (can be potting soil or a spot in your yard.), flowerpot or garden space, garden implement (can be a trowel, rake, or your hands.)

## Prepare in Advance

- Decide whether you will work with indoor dirt or outdoor dirt. This activity deals primarily with the preparation of the ground for planting.
- You may, however, decide to combine it with the activity titled **Spring Planting**. If so, collect the seeds or plants you want to put into the dirt.

## Activity Plan

1. Pray: Go to a natural place that's inspirational for you—sitting in the yard, taking a walk, or simply looking out a window at the sky. Sit in quiet for a moment noticing God and nature around you. Then put your awareness into words. It might go something like this:

*Creative God, I receive your creation with awe and thanks. May my life continue your work of creating our world anew. Amen.*

2. Prepare some ground for planting: This could include one or more of the following:
  - Putting some potting soil in a container
  - Pulling up weeds in an outside garden
  - Raking a garden space and perhaps adding compost
  - Rototilling a garden space
3. As you work with the dirt, notice its feel. Wear gloves if you must, but at least spend a little of the time with your fingers in the dirt remembering the life cycle of birth/death/rebirth. Every year we see this cycle recreated in nature with the falling of leaves, dormancy, then rains revive the seeds in the spring. So too, we remember the Scripture passage, "For out of it [the ground] you were taken, you are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19). Ponder the Paschal mystery of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection as you work with the soil.

## Variation

If a place for planting is not available to you (not even a planter), or if you simply prefer, go to a woods, park, arboretum, or conservatory. Yes, look at what's growing, but especially notice what it's growing in – the ground. Touch it with awe and reverence. It holds the beginnings of new life.