

Today, we continue our series on Cultivating Healthy Relationships with a focus on the virtue of **Humility**. How does Humility influence the health of our relationships? And what does authentic humility based on scripture look and sound and act like? It can be tricky to know. It is a quiet, wary virtue, one difficult to discern clearly in one's own life - and we are rightly skeptical of those who would confidently claim it!

Happily, my thinking and preparation for this service coincided with Earth Day this week. What a beautiful spring week it was. The first blush of opening tree buds created a shimmering forested tapestry across the countryside. The moist soil in garden and field began warming and drying in anticipation of planting of early crops like garden pea and lettuce. And in the woods, dappled light filtered through the exposed branches of the forest canopy onto varied detritus and leaf litter covering the forest floor, slowly warming and activating microorganisms that will soon begin their miraculous work of converting last year's winter dying into rich **Humus** to fertilize and nourish the next generation of forest plants.

Which prompted me to reflect on how interesting it is that the word Humility, which means "lowness, small stature," and being "grounded" and of the earth, shares the same origin as the word Humus, that essential layer of organic matter that lies above the soil and below the decomposing leaf litter. Think of it as compost - and you know how much I love compost!

Truly, we **Humans** (ah, another word that shares this same origin!) are of the earth, and we return to earth. We could do worse than find virtue in allying our spirit to the humble faithfulness of the soil that nourishes all terrestrial life on Mother Earth.

Let us pray: God, thank you for the beauty of Spring time and the hope instilled in us by the renewing of life and invigorating creation that opens to us during this time. Open us now to the presence of your renewing spirit in our time of worship.

Amen.