

Creating an honest Creation!

Genesis 1¹⁻²³; Psalm 136; Romans 8¹⁸⁻²⁵; Matthew 6^{25-end}

God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. [Genesis 1³¹]

Are the things we worry about the same as the things that God worries about? That seems to be the question that Jesus is asking in Matthew's Gospel. It will come as no surprise to anyone to know that I wake up thinking about what we will eat that day and someone else in the Rectory wakes up thinking about what they will wear! Given that Jesus says, **If God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you?** why do I have to have an opinion on what should be worn?

What is clear from the readings today is that we have to learn how to have a genuine concern for our planet. The problem I have is that I don't enjoy being shouted at by Grumpy Greta and I have no wish to be like those who seem to embrace green issues and then forget how to use soap!

I do want to embrace the Diocesan Zero Carbon Target for 2030 (now a whole CofE target after General Synod this week) - and our new heating system goes some way towards that in using air-exchange technology. I am also aware that the little things we can do will help

- We use 26% of the energy in our homes for heating, so one of the top tips for saving CO₂ is to turn your thermostat down by 1C. This would cut your heating bills by up to 10%, saving you around £40 a year, and the planet around 300kg of CO₂. If you turned the system down another degree you could probably afford a decent jumper and not notice too much!
- If we were to change the incandescent light bulbs in our homes for LED's it would save, on average, 14% of our electricity consumption.
- Use common sense - do you need to keep the water running when you brush your teeth; do you need to use a vehicle rather than walk; do you need to have the lights on?

If we still question whether this is a theological issue or one that should be important to Christians we need to have another look at the readings for today.

- ✠ Genesis 1 makes the simple point that God created the world as part of the creation of the universe and that he said that it was **good**. There is no

mileage in getting stuck in a debate about whether God made the world in 6 24 hour periods (because if God can make the world out of nothing, time is an irrelevance) or whether what we have is a product of evolution (as the real miracle here is that 3000 years before science as we know was created, the order of creation is precisely right to sustain life).

When God handed the world over to human beings to have **dominion** over it he said it was **very good**. Our task is to ensure that when our guardianship of the planet is ended the same could be said. That is a theological imperative.

- ✠ Paul tells us that creation is looking forward to a new future as much as any Christian is. It is clear that the earth has become a victim of its inhabitants - from Paul's perspective it is because of sin: the earth was punished along with the first humans.

The earth looks forward in hope - it will be liberated **from bondage to decay** just as Christians look forward to the same thing. In this regard, theology is much more hopeful even than ecology!

- ✠ Jesus tells us that God has designed his creation to be both beautiful and sustaining. What is clear that he condemns worry about our self-centred concerns and that our priority should be **the kingdom of God**.

In the teaching of Jesus, the Kingdom of God has a present aspect and a future aspect. The future is clear enough - we will be with God in the presence of Christ. The kingdom of God in the present has at its heart i) Repentance - an honesty with God and ourselves about the things we get wrong (and that does include our stewardship of the planet); ii) it is about a kingdom where justice is a priority and the needs of all met (again, that applies to the unjust distributions of resources on this planet); and iii) any Kingdom needs a monarch, and Jesus is King and so we should do what he says!

You can read Jesus final words as a challenge against our natural tendency to procrastination: deferring worrying about what matters to tomorrow is a sure sign that nothing will be done: **today's trouble is enough for today** tells us that anything we are going to do needs to be done now!