

LENT REFLECTION FOR WEDNESDAY 10TH MARCH 2021.

Prepared by Jane Lane

Sometime ago as a church we decided to try to become more eco-friendly. Blue tits had found a home to rear their young in the cigarette disposal box by the door of the church hall and Junior Church decided that in the future bird boxes in the church garden would be an appropriate way of helping to provide for God's creation.

In Lent many people give something up to remember the time Jesus spent in the wilderness. Could we give something up to help the environment and could we do something positive for our planet?

Let us reflect on the words of the hymn – 'God in his love for us lent us this planet' by Fred Pratt Green

God in his love for us lent us this planet,
gave it a purpose in time and in space:
small as a spark from the fire of creation,
cradle of life and the home of our race.

Thanks be to God for its bounty and beauty,
life that sustains us in body and mind:
plenty for all, if we learn how to share it,
riches undreamed-of to fathom and find.

Long have our human wars ruined its harvest;
long has earth bowed to the terror of force;
long have we wasted what others have need of,
poisoned the fountain of life at its source.

Earth is the Lord's: it is ours to enjoy it,
ours, as his stewards, to farm and defend.
From its pollution, misuse and destruction,
good Lord, deliver us, world without end!

F. Pratt Green (1903- 2000)
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Rejoice & Sing No 85

The words of the hymn give us much to think about. Lockdown has given many of us an opportunity to assess our lifestyle, to enjoy nature and to work to improve the way we treat our environment.

A LITANY OF CELEBRATION FOR OUR CREATION.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth
God said "Let there be light" and day and night began.
We praise you, creating God, for the gentle turn of day and night with their rhythm of work and rest.
God said "Let the waters hold together in one place"
and dry land emerged from sea.
We praise you creating God, for the stunning power of the oceans and the breath-taking beauty of landscape.
God said "Let things grow everywhere"
and from the tiniest moss to the mightiest tree the plants emerged.
We praise you, creating God, for the super abundance of plants and the rich variety of resources they provide.
God said "Let there be light in the sky and suns, planets and moons began their orbits.
We praise you, creating God, for the scale of the universe with all its secrets to inspire our awe.
God said "Let there be life",

and fish began to swim as birds took to the air.
We praise you creating God, for the life that teems in waters and the glorious sight of birds on the wing.
God said "Let there be animals",
and across the land ran, hopped and crawled a wonderful horde.
We praise you creating God, for all the creatures sharing our land and the ways they help and sustain us.
God said, "Let there be people",
and in God's own image came women and men.
We praise you, creating God, for our gift of life in creation and your call to care for all you have made.
Neil Thorogood.

Prayer: In Praise of God's Creation.

How wonderful, O Lord are the works of your hands.
The heavens declare your glory,
the arch of the sky declares your handiwork.
In your love you have given us the power
to behold the beauty the beauty of your world in all its splendour.
The sun and the stars, the valleys and the hills,
The rivers and the lakes, all disclose your presence.
The roaring breakers of the sea tell of your awesome might;
The beasts of the field and the birds of the air proclaim your wondrous will.
In your goodness, you have made us able to hear the music of the world.
The voice of loved ones reveal to us that you are in our midst.
A divine song through all creation
John Birch

God created birds and fish on the fifth day of the creation story

Genesis 1: 20-22

And God said, 'Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky.' ²¹ So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ²² God blessed them and said, 'Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth.'
And he gave us the responsibility to care for all he had made.

Genesis 1: 28

God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.'

Sadly the numbers of birds and fish are diminishing, even the sparrow, that cheeky little brown job, has decreased.

POEM BY NICK FAWCETT.

You've given a world, Lord, of untold delight,
That moves me to worship and praise; that speaks of your glory by -day and by night-
So much there to thrill and amaze.
The peak of the mountain. The shade of the tree,
The colour and scent of a flower,
The peace of a river or wrath of the sea-
each gives me a glimpse of your power.
The laughter of children, the crunching of leaves,

Or delicate song of a bird,
The hum of a city, or whispering breeze-
In so much your voice can be heard.

Sparrows are mentioned many times in the bible.

Psalm 84: 1-4

¹ How lovely is your dwelling-place,
LORD Almighty!
² My soul yearns, even faints,
for the courts of the LORD;
my heart and my flesh cry out
for the living God.
³ Even the sparrow has found a home,
and the swallow a nest for herself,
where she may have her young –
a place near your altar,
LORD Almighty, my King and my God.
⁴ Blessed are those who dwell in your house;
they are ever praising you.^[4]

Jesus refers to sparrows and he reminds us that he knows whenever a sparrow falls, he goes on to say that we are worth more than many sparrows. God cares for all he has made.

Luke 12: 6-7

Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

Poem: NOT A SPARROW FALLS by Frank Topping.

We heard them first a whirring rhythmic throb
A steady beat of majestic wings and suddenly
A squadron of swans, long necks extended,
Flew low over their reedy river.
We held our breath, pulses racing
In an excitement of joy and fear,
For they were both graceful and menacing in their power. Beneath them, unmoved,
A family of mallard ducks
Paddle between the reeds in the slow green water.
The shadow and sound of the swans fade.
Now we can hear
The squeak and scurry of moorhens and coots
And see the surprised, indignant head of a crested grebe.
Swifts and swallows dive and dart feeding on the wing.
In the tree and out of sight a robin sings a song that is bigger than the bird,
Sweet and rich in pitch and variation.
Distantly there is a continuous sound, a rumble or buzz,
And it is hard to realise that a mile or two away
Cars and vans and lorries are rushing into towns and cities;
That people are queueing and jostling,
Conveyer belts are endlessly moving, whilst telephones ring
On shops, offices and homes.
We seem to be in separate worlds, unaware of each other.
Yet not a sparrow falls without my heavenly father knows it.

A PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

Lord, we pray for our government, that they may carefully consider how their decisions may affect the environment.

Lord hear our prayer.

We pray for our farmers, stewards of the land, that they may farm in an environmentally friendly way protecting wildlife.

Lord hear our prayer.

Lord, we pray that as we shop for food we will consider how many miles our food has had to travel And we will buy British whenever possible.

Lord hear our prayer.

We pray for our countryside, that we care for what you have provided, and that we do not mar the beauty around us.

Amen

A CLOSING PRAYER.

This we know, the earth does not belong to us,

We belong to the earth.

This we know, all things are connected,

Like the blood that unites a family.

This we know, we did not weave the web of life,

We are merely a strand in it.

This we know, whatever we do to the web

We do it to ourselves and the friends around us. Let us give thanks for the gift of creation.

Let us give thanks that all things hold together in Christ.

Amen

John Birch.

So, this Lent let us find ways to care for our planet and try to give up something which will in turn enhance the life of the creatures, trees and plants that God has provided.

AN IRISH BLESSING.

Deep peace of the running wave to you,

Deep peace of the flowing air to you,

Deep peace of the quiet earth to you,

Deep peace of the shining stars to you,

Deep peace of the Son of Peace to you, forever.

Bible readings are from the New International Version