

ST ANDREW'S CHURCH GRAFHAM

'THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK'

9th September 2020

Many years ago I took the young daughter of some friends on the London Underground. She was both fascinated and intrigued by the different names of the stations we passed through. Eventually she turned to me to say that she thought God must have had fun naming them all. As we grow older and more serious (possibly!), I wonder if we start to have difficulty in thinking of God and 'fun' in the same sentence.

In recent years the Church worldwide has been encouraged to keep the period from 1st September until 4th October as Creationtide. The season is dedicated to God as Creator and Sustainer of all life and is a time when we can renew and reaffirm our relationship with the whole of God's creation. I'm very much hoping that, once there are fewer restrictions on us, this is something we can explore and celebrate even more fully at St Andrew's than we already do given our beautiful rural location in the Surrey Hills.

Whatever your beliefs about process of creation, in the book of Genesis we are told that each day God looked at what he had created and saw that it was good. On the sixth day after creating humankind he looked at *everything* he had made and saw that it was *very* good. Perhaps this week you might like to read that first chapter of Genesis. You might even like just to read the account of one day each day over the coming week. However you choose to do it why not pause at the end of each of those days of creation and like God sit back and look - and see that it is good. In that word 'good', I sense God's satisfaction and enjoyment. However it is in the various retellings of the creation story for children that I often sense something more - fun and excitement. In 'Colourful Creation', the author, Lucy Moore, talks about God grinning when he sees all the trees; and then on day six 'the Lord went completely to town!'

*'We'll have oodles of animals, some yellow, some brown.
We'll have a great range of things all fluffy and hairy,
Some cute and cuddly, some sleek and scary!*

*Reptiles! Marsupials! Amphibians! Mammals!
Cougars, koalas, chameleons and camels!
Terrapins, tree frogs, things ending in 'saurus',
pandas, pigs, porcupines - it will be glorious!*



Perhaps you experience something of that feeling of excitement and wonderment when watching wildlife programmes but I think we also need to have it in connection with our everyday lives. Through this summer Stuart and I have found great joy and pleasure in watching a mallard successfully raise six ducklings. We've delighted in each stage of their development until they finally left home. I've written before about observing the natural world carefully - why not do so again this week allowing a sense of excitement and also contentment to flow through you. And then give thanks to God.



On a very different scale I have long loved the image in one of Graham Kendrick's hymns of the 'hands that flung stars into space'. The sheer exuberance of it almost takes my breath away. Perhaps you might like to spend some time outside watching the night sky. Or you might like to take a look online at some of the stunning images from the Hubble telescope.

Yet as we rejoice in the wonders of God's creation in the natural world we need also to remember our responsibilities to all creation which includes us and our fellow human beings. Lucy Moore ends her creation story with the words 'Now you know that the earth has been given to you as a present to treasure so what will you do?' In his encyclical 'Laudato Si', Pope Francis made it very clear that there is an inseparable bond between concern for nature, justice for the poor, and commitment to a fair and just society. More food for future 'Thoughts for the Week' but in the meantime you might like to use and reflect on the following prayer from 'Laudato Si'.

All-powerful God,
you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures.
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.
Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty.
Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one.
God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes.
Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.
Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth.
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature
as we journey towards your infinite light.
We thank you for being with us each day.
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace. Amen.

With my love and prayers

Camilla

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