

Climate Sunday Talk

- I don't know about you but for me one of the most wonderful pictures I have ever seen is the first colour picture of our planet, Earth, taken from space
- The seas, the green land, the mountains, the deserts, and the weather systems all combining to make a magnificent scene.
- The picture shows the Incredible beauty of our planet: it shows the sheer wonder of the world in which God our maker has placed us.
- And it is right that we celebrate the wonder and beauty of creation and the God who has made it – 'O worship the King all glorious above' as we have just heard sung',
- And yet if we come a little closer to the earth and look into its history we find a more complex and indeed threatening picture.
- The earth can be troubled by Earthquakes and Volcanoes, by violent storms, wild fires and floods.
- The earth is beautiful, but it can also be turbulent and capricious, just as the crown of creation – humanity, us can be. We can be wonderfully creative as the arts and architecture show us, but we can also be horribly destructive as nuclear weapons demonstrate so clearly can also destroy.
- The earth is in many ways fragile and vulnerable both to the ravages of nature and the pollution and destruction of humanity.
- No wonder The great English mystic, Lady Julian of Norwich, saw the earth as a tiny Acorn held in the loving hand of God.
- Franz Joseph Hayden's great oratorio 'The Creation' proclaims the glory of God and his creation, but ironically he wrote this gloriously optimistic work just as the Industrial Revolution was getting underway. It is the Industrial Revolution that has filled the atmosphere with greenhouse gases especially carbon dioxide and industrial farming that has released vast quantities of methane into the atmosphere.
- The ecological challenge is not new. Back in the 1980s Bp. Hugh was one of the first Christian leaders to espouse ecology. Then he was dismissed as a crank, now he is regarded as a prophet.
- Today the earth has reached a crisis point where the right decisions have to be made and the difficult bit the decisions have to be followed through.
- COP26 will abound with good intentions, but it will only make a difference if Governments and individuals fulfil the good intentions.
- So far the record has not been good. The report of the climate of the climate change committee this past week shows that we are only going at half the pace we need to achieve to make us net carbon neutral. The report urges greater use electric cars, heat pumps instead of gas boilers, and eating less meat as key targets for improvement.
- So what does God say. In our first reading from Genesis chapter one, we are told that humankind is made in God's image according to God's likeness and that we have been given dominion over all living things. It is vital that we interpret dominion correctly. It doesn't mean we can do what we like with creation. It means we are responsible under God for creation, we are stewards, we are co-creators and that is an awesome responsibility.
- Then Colossians tells us that Christ is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.
- All our thinking and acting must begin with him. In particular we must learn from his justice and his love and practise these virtues in the way we live.
- The earth can be saved from the ravages of climate change but only if governments and individuals have the courage and conviction to act in God's way.