

PARISH Magazine

 Croydon
Minster and St George's, Waddon

Aug / Sept 2020



Care for our Common Home

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and much more...

PARISH DIARY

Croydon Minster

At the time of publication of this issue, phased plans for the resumption of public worship are as follows.

Sunday 5th July – Wednesday 12th August inclusive

11.30am on Sundays and Wednesdays: A 'Service of the Word' comprising readings from the Bible, psalm, reflection and prayers, held in the nave.

The church remains open from 11am – 1pm.

From Sunday 16th August onwards

10am Sundays, 11am Wednesdays: The Eucharist will be celebrated once again in public with Holy Communion (in one kind) available to all.

So that we know we can accommodate all those planning to come to the Eucharist we will ask you to let us know, through an Eventbrite link, that you're planning to come. A link will be sent out each week. This will also help with contact tracing, should that prove necessary, as we will know who is present.

The church remains open from 11am – 1pm.

Diary for St George's from August 2020 until further notice

Sundays 9.30am & 10.30am Eucharist

Please contact Mother Pat on 020 8688 7006 if you would like to attend either service (we have restricted numbers for distancing reasons)

Thursdays from 6 August 2020

10am Eucharist with shared reflections on the readings

Saturdays from 5 September

10am – noon Community Breakfast £3 (1st Saturdays only)

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Care for our Common Home: what does it mean for us?

This edition of the Parish Magazine has the theme of 'Care for our Common Home'. It contains some fascinating and thought-provoking articles about our care for creation and the impact of decisions and choices we make and how they affect the environment.

The phrase 'Care for our Common Home' is regularly used by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Pope Francis and the Ecumenical Patriarch to speak about the environmental crisis we are currently in. The phrase reminds us that the environment is not simply 'out there' but is the very place we inhabit of the Creation in which we live and that we share with other human beings, and also animal and plant life. To speak of our Common Home makes the point that the Creation is not exclusive.

We have a guest contributor, Fr Kevin Smith, Priest Administrator of the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham. Drawing on classical Anglican writers and Pope Francis, Fr Kevin reflects on the Walsingham shrine theme this year 'Mary, Queen of Creation'. This is a very welcome article because of Fr Kevin's insights and also since we have begun to renew the existing Minster Cell of the Society of Our Lady of Walsingham, doing so with our friends at St Michael's, West Croydon and St Alban's, South Norwood.

As Christians it is very important to reflect on the depth and beauty of creation. Elaine Cooper helps us do this in a Bible study that starts with the classic Biblical Creation narratives of Genesis chapters 1 and 2, but then goes beyond to explore the psalms and wise Christian insights from a range of figures. Vanessa Atigla, one of the young adults of the church, reflects more on Genesis 2.15, in which we are given the task of stewardship of creation.

Fr Joe's article connects the care of creation with the mission of the Church using a set of 'Marks of Mission' defined by the Anglican Church, and why it matters for

Christians to take care of our common home as part of our mission which includes, but goes far beyond, the salvation of souls.

Seeing Care for our Common Home in its widest sense, Derry-Anne Hammond's article about the modern sculpture in the City of London also connects Black Lives Matter into our overarching theme: how can we claim to care for our common home when many lives appear not to matter simply because they are black? I have also sought in a book review to think about how we understand our relationship to the Creation through the lockdown experience.

Mother Pat's article connects us to our experience of the Creation in the beauty of nature and sets that within the wider sense of delighting in life itself. In that spirit of wonder, Susan Williams gives us a wonderful way into meditating on the diversity and richness of creation which prompts us to prayer. We should never see the Creation as remote from us but as the place of worship too. Jon Blanchard describes the emphasis on the Creation in the Orthodox Church and the operation of the Holy Spirit is brought to the fore. Inspired by the contributors who remind us about the place of wonder and worship in relation to creation, I have also written on 'Praying, believing, living: signs of care for our common home in the Eucharist'. We will pick up these themes in worship in the period from 1st September to the feast of St Francis of Assisi, the great 'Creation Saint', on 4th October.

The bottom line question for us all is: what difference does all this talk of Care for Our Common Home mean to me as a Christian? I hope that we will see that the Creation still matters, and care of it as a home to us all is as much of a priority as it was pre-lockdown; and that we will see that we must all make changes to our lifestyles if anything is to improve: do I *need* to drive? Can I avoid that plastic bag? Can I reduce my food waste? Can we as a church aspire to be an 'Eco-church' and contribute to the Church of England's target in eliminating our carbon footprint by 2030? All this will take time, but it is now urgent. May God bless our Common Home, his gift to us and all creation.

Fr Andrew

Letter from St George's

My dear friends,

Greetings from your sisters and brothers in St George's. And yes, I'm still here, the virus meant that my retirement home could not be worked on as the restrictions in Wales have only just been lifted.

'All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.' John 1.3

I wonder if you can quickly think of somewhere you have been moved by the scene before you, where you might have felt at one with nature and God? Mine is the Long Mynd near Church Stretton in Shropshire (*pictured right*) and the other was down Big Pit in Blaenavon – total darkness (a contrast).



But I wonder if these mean anything to you – it's a winter afternoon and the sky is flooded with the fiery red of the setting sun. Or, it's early on a bright spring morning and the birds are singing their hearts out. The sunlight sparkles on heavy dew in the fields as if someone has scattered millions of diamonds. Or the face of a much-loved child lights up with a smile as he or she sees mum or dad approaching. You see these are moments when God invites us to delight in his creation, to enjoy with God the world he has made and the people who surround us.

Moments when the innocence and joy that were there at the beginning are restored and we know ourselves to be children of God, walking in God's love and light (that for me was my experience on Long Mynd). Perhaps this is a time to ask ourselves if we have lost the sense that God delights and rejoices in us, the

human race, his creation.

Obviously, this time has given us extraordinary experiences, and we can't help wondering where it's all going to end? How are we going to face the new future, or will it all be forgotten in ten years' time? All this takes us back to what we can't see, but we do see the consequences; for example, the virus can only be seen with the microscope, the outcome is seen in how human beings respond to it. I suppose it's a bit like the Holy Spirit. It has been working in us all by the support, help and prayer we have all shared in, yes, even those isolating on their own. Prayer is both easy and complicated, but its outcomes are glorious when we remember, as we read in *Mister God, This is Anna*, 'we have points of view, but God has view points'. So even though our prayers have not been answered as WE wanted, they are answered in the way other people respond by their actions in this time of crisis. Everyone is called to love...

How often do we reflect on how we might respond to a God whose love for us is so strong that he chooses to come and live among us to restore us and heal us? It's both magical and mystical that you and I, little us are so loved by God – sometimes I feel that it's mind-blowing knowledge.

I feel that those words from St John 1.3 express the great mystery which is at the heart of our faith: that God became human. Particularly in the Book of Proverbs (8.1, 22–31), what I read is full of light, beauty and joy as the voice of Wisdom talks about rejoicing in the world at the very beginning of creation. I think I can recall one version of the Bible uses the word 'playing' and speaks of Wisdom being God's darling and delight, a bit like my idea of the Garden of Eden being God's 'play-park'. It speaks of a new creation where everything is as it should be and anything is possible.

Things are no longer as they were at the beginning, unspoiled, but the Gospel message is that even in our battered world, the light of life and beauty still shines – the darkness has not overcome it. God still delights in the human race, in each one of us. And it's in the nature of love, in the nature of God, to want to enjoy companionship with us, to want the very best for us.

So he comes to live among us, to draw us to himself in Jesus. In Jesus we see what God is like in human form – concerned about people's lives and welfare; willing to forgive and heal; always ready to offer a new start with new possibilities opening before us, as it was in the beginning.

And if God delights in us then surely it matters to him how we respond.

Cardinal Basil Hume has written a number of wonderful books, which anyone can read and think, 'yes, I understand what he is saying'. One such book is called *The Mystery of the Incarnation*. He writes something like this – we mustn't worry about whether or not we have love for God. We just need to remember **the simple truth that God is in love with each of us**. Isn't that just an amazing thought – that each of us can say, 'God is in love with me,' 'God delights in me.'

It's not something that can happen overnight. We'll probably spend our whole life receiving God's invitations and we'll probably miss a few because we can't or won't watch and listen. Or maybe we'll recognise the invitations but are afraid of saying 'yes', because that would mean having to change and grow, and change and growth are very often uncomfortable or downright painful. But we aren't alone. Jesus, the Word and Wisdom of God made flesh, is with us. He is our light and his life is the life that will never die. No darkness in our lives can overcome that light, but sometimes it does seem as if the darkness is all there is, and that's when we need each other.

Now our own light may go out for a while, leaving us lost in the darkness. But being part of the body of Christ means that someone else nearby is carrying a light and can hold that up for us until our darkness passes. Then it may be our turn to hold the Christ-light for someone else.

We all know there is darkness around us, you only have to pick up a newspaper, turn on the TV or radio:

- in the damage we have done to our world;
- in the tragedies and disasters we hear about daily;
- in our own lives and in the lives of others.

But in that darkness, my friends, a light shines and refuses to be overcome. A light which offers us new hope, new strength, new courage and new beginnings. My mum used to say to me when I was struggling at school and getting really upset about not coping – ‘bad start, good finish.’ I have always believed in that. So don’t doubt God delights in us – there is no darkness that can overcome that light, or that love. Remember this is for you: ‘God is in love with me,’ ‘God delights in me.’ Believe it!!

LIFE IS LOVELY, THANKS BE TO GOD

Life is good! Let people shout it,
Life is lovely, thanks be to God.
Even though we sometimes doubt it,
Life is lovely, thanks be to God.
Working for a fairer new day,
Life is lovely, thanks be to God.
When the world, not just a few, say:
Life is lovely, thanks be to God.
Signs of hope for which we’re striving,
Life is lovely, thanks be to God.
Hunger ending, children thriving,
Life is lovely, thanks be to God.
Shout it with your loudest breath,
Life is lovely, thanks be to God.
We believe in life before death,
Life is lovely, thanks be to God. Amen.

Blessings to you all, and have the best summer you can.

Mother Pat

Care of God’s Creation

‘God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.’ Genesis 2.15



One of the things that has really been enjoyable about the lockdown is watching the characteristics of nature bloom right before our eyes. Watching the birds take advantage of the clear skies and wild animals roaming silent streets has highlighted the importance of God’s creation, and what it really means to take care of this gift. We can see God’s creation in almost everything we do,

in the places we go and the people we meet, because God’s creation is not just manifested in the land and on the sea but in us as human beings.

God created the heavens and the earth and all things in them and put man in charge to ensure their durability. What does this mean to us Christians? The beautiful message here is that God is the one who provides for us, and as his faithful followers, we must show our gratitude of our stewardship by caring for what God has given us and leaving a legacy for the next generation. This is portrayed in Psalm 24.1, ‘The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it’. The lockdown has dramatically put a spotlight on nature and in a way explained to us how truly beautiful yet endangered the creation of God is.

It is in times like this when we must think about the importance of the gift of God and how we can work towards preserving it. You might be forgiven for thinking

that as there are fewer cars on the road and fewer planes in the sky, nature has benefitted from this, but we still hear news of illegal logging in the Amazon rainforest. It has been reported that there has been an 64% increase in deforestation in the Amazon rainforest and this trend has seen devastation in the livelihood of the indigenous people. This is a clear indicator of just how strenuous times have been for those less fortunate.

The financial burdens that have materialized through the pandemic may have pushed some people to the point of committing horrendous acts of malfeasance on God's creation without thought. Humans have on numerous occasions marred God's creation, but there is always hope: hope that God will forgive, hope that God will renew what we have destroyed and hope that we can discipline ourselves and learn from our mistake. Hope, because we know that God is always in control.

The important thing we must know is that God's work is ongoing and will never end. This means that we will always be part of this ongoing process. This doesn't necessarily mean in a good way, but we can redeem ourselves by being good stewards. 1 John 1.9 tells us, 'But if we confess our sins to God, he will keep his promise and do what is right: he will forgive us our sins and purify us from all our wrongdoing.' We must acknowledge that the way we treat God's creation, our friends, family, animals and the earth affects our relationship with God.

It is important to have faith at these hard times and sometimes we forget to be faithful and thankful when things are going well. We cry out to God when things are hard and God showers us with his endless love, but no matter our situation we must always have faith.

Vannessa Atigla



Dear Friend

***Please 'come' to our
Coffee Morning on
Saturday 26 September
from 10.30-12 noon on
ZOOM – further details to
follow***

Diana Hemmings



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Praying, Believing, Living: Signs of Care for our Common Home in the Eucharist

There is an old Latin saying ‘*lex orandi, lex credendi*’. It means that **the words we use to pray are the words we believe**. And sometimes is added ‘*lex vivendi*’, which adds how we **live** to what we pray and believe. It is a good motto: what we pray in church informs what we believe in our faith and in how we live that out.

As we consider the Care of our Common Home let’s look for some evidence of what we pray, believe and live in relation to the earth. As Jon Blanchard points out in another article, the Orthodox Church has been very explicit about this, especially in seeing the creative action of the Holy Spirit, the mighty rushing wind that blew over the waters at the beginning of creation, the same Spirit that breathed into us gives us life of body and spirit: as another Latin phrase puts it, ‘*Veni, Creator Spiritus*’, ‘Come, Creator Spirit’.

In our Eucharistic liturgy references to the Creation are there, but we may not spot them. If we stop to think, the whole Eucharist deploys the stuff of the earth, the gifts of creation, and transforms them. We ourselves are dust, and to dust we shall return, but we are given the breath of life and are transformed. Underlying our Eucharist is the offering of ourselves back to our Creator, hence, as Fr Kevin Smith has noted in his article, we recite the Creed which opens with the statement that God is ‘maker of heaven and earth’.

When we pray, our intercessions should include the needs of the world, not simply human existence; there should be space for thanksgiving for the gift of life and its beauty and diversity, and this is picked up in one of the endings to intercession given in *Common Worship*:

Rejoicing in the fellowship of [N and of] all your saints,
we commend ourselves *and the whole creation* to your unfailing love.

The most obvious evidence of drawing Care of Creation into the liturgy is in the prayers associated with the offertory. Offertory is the time for offering: offering of money; offering of bread and wine; offering of ourselves. The prayers acknowledge that the gifts we offer are only offerable because we have already been given them. They – money, bread, wine, you, me – are not ours to give, they already belong to God. We can see this in these prayers:

Yours, Lord, is the greatness, the power,
the glory, the splendour, and the majesty;
for everything in heaven and on earth is yours.

All **All things come from you,
and of your own do we give you.**

Or the prayers when bread and wine is prepared:

Blessed are you, Lord God of all Creation:
through your goodness we have this bread / wine to offer,
fruit of the earth / fruit of the vine and work of human hands.
It will become for us
the bread of life / the cup of salvation.

All **Blessed be God for ever.**

A very early prayer, drawn from the text known as *The Didache* (a title from the first line of the text ‘The teaching of the Lord to the Gentiles by the twelve apostles’), connects the gifts we offer to the tending of the fields:

As the grain once scattered in the fields
and the grapes once dispersed on the hillside
are now reunited on this table in bread and wine,
so, Lord, may your whole Church soon be gathered together
from the corners of the earth
into your kingdom.

All **Amen.**

We have become more and more aware in recent years that something implicit in a Christian attitude towards the Creation must be made explicit: the Creation is a gift, it is not our possession, we are stewards of it. This is reinforced in the Eucharist, but we could be more attuned to it. The final commission of the Eucharist is to 'Go in peace to love and serve the Lord'. We need to understand that commission in terms of care of creation, loving and serving the Lord as stewards of creation, not exploiters of it. And we can do that day by day, not least in the practice of saying Grace – a short prayer of thanksgiving for the food we eat day by day. Doing that extends our Eucharist into daily life as we give thanks for the gifts we receive:

For what we are about to receive, may the Lord make us truly thankful.
Amen.

Let's make what we pray in church the foundation of our believing and living.

Fr Andrew

A Thought from Pope Francis: Pandemic and Care for our Common Home

'We have failed in our responsibility to be guardians and stewards of the earth. *We need only take a frank look at the facts to see that our common home is falling into serious disrepair.* We have polluted it, we have despoiled it, endangering our very lives... We have no future if we destroy the very environment that sustains us.' Now, facing the pandemic, we have widely and vividly experienced our interconnectedness in vulnerability. Much of humanity has responded to that vulnerability with resolve and solidarity. We have proven that we can do it, we can change, and it is now for us to translate those traits into a permanent conversion of resolve and solidarity to cope with the larger and longer-term threats. (ed. Pope Francis, *Life after the Pandemic*, p.10. *His italics.* https://www.vaticannews.va/content/dam/lev/la-vita-dopo-la-pandemia/pdf/INGLESE_11_05.pdf)

'Let's start at the very beginning...'

The opening chapters of Genesis begin with two stories of God as creator of all that exists. They are different in style and believed to come from writers of different traditions. In the 9th century the Celtic mystic John Scotus Eriugena taught that Genesis was not a chronological account but a meditation on the ever-present mystery of creation.

Genesis 1.1 to 2.4a describes creation spread over six days. God rests on a seventh day. Eight acts of creation are each introduced by the words 'and God said...'. God first speaks light into being – then sky, land and sea are formed, with plants and celestial bodies. Each area is then filled with living creatures.

Lastly God creates 'man', including both male and female, with no indication that female is in any way an inferior being to male. The whole of humanity is created in God's image – as not just 'good' but 'very good'. God grants them 'dominion' over the newly created world and all its creatures.

Genesis 2.4b to 25 begins with earth already existing but without life forms. God creates a man – fashioned from the dust and given life by the breath of God. God fills a garden with plants and trees. Man is given stewardship of the garden to work and prevent it from damage. God creates the creatures and the man names them – signifying ownership. Neither birds nor animals provide the companionship man needs, so God creates woman from the man to be his true and equal partner in the care of the garden and creation on God's behalf.

* * *

'The heavens tell the glory of God; the firmament proclaims his handiwork.'

Psalms 19.1

'What is it that breathes fire into the equations and makes a universe for them to describe? The usual approach of science of constructing a

mathematical model cannot answer the question of why there should be a universe for the model to describe.'

Stephen Hawking

'I asked the earth, I asked the seas and the deeps, among the living things that creep; I asked the winds that blow, I asked the heavens, the sun, the moon, the stars. My question was the gaze I turned to them. Their answer was their beauty.'

Augustine of Hippo

Science tells the story from a different perspective. How, over millennia, life has developed – from waste dust of millions of stars, the first primeval self-replicating molecules, developing into more complex organisms, each one better adapted to its environment and subject to physical laws.

I have always understood Genesis and science as complementary. Together they tell us of God who created the evolutionary process of the natural world and the ground rules by which it works, who acts on a timescale beyond our comprehension, creating a creation which can express itself in increasingly diverse forms. Each one a new creation equally valued and sustained by God. Why do we assume that God works only by logic rather than as an artist? Why can there not be chaos/creativity and order at the same time?

The worlds revealed by microscope and telescope of things that exist beyond our sight can speak to us of God's creative power. Eriugena also taught that God's self-revelation was through the Word of God in scripture and the Word of God in creation.

In this time of lockdown the sights and sounds of nature have come to the fore. Have you found yourself longing for green spaces or sight of the sea or stars? When was the last time you were engrossed in the intricacies of a leaf or the patterns in a pebble? Have you taken a moment every day to offer praise to God for the wonders of the gift of creation?

* * *

'For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made.'

Psalm 139.13–14

'In the absence of any other proof the thumb alone would convince me of God's existence.'

Isaac Newton

Psalm 139 is one of my favourite psalms. I am probably not alone. It reminds us of the sheer wonder of the human body. It may not always function as well as we would hope and things wear out or stop working. It is vulnerable and fragile but still amazing.

What sort of creatures are we that are able to unlock the secrets of DNA, to split the atom, to compose *The Magic Flute*, yet still at the mercy of earthquake, accident, cancer cell or virus?

How do we live with and make any possible sense of these paradoxes?

* * *

'You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet.'

Psalm 8.6

'Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation?'

Job 38.4

**'I saw a little thing, the size of a hazelnut, lying in the palm of my hand'...
'It is all that is made'... 'It lasts and ever shall: for God loves it'**

Julian of Norwich

God has not stepped back and stopped caring for creation. Chapters 38 to 41 of the book of Job echo the poetry of Genesis as a celebration of the good order, beauty, diversity and absurdity of the creation that lives and breathes and has its being far from the gaze of human beings (but not God's!) and without reference to our wants and needs.

Humanity was given dominion and stewardship – to be co-creators with God in a wise and loving care of the earth and the animal creation – to nurture and respect it in God’s name, responsible ultimately to Him.

The problem with stewardship lies not in the guaranteeing of our share but in the belief that we also have the right to determine all other species’ share.

Do we only see everything in creation as made for our (i.e. humanity’s) use and benefit? Does that benefit extend to the whole of humanity or just one ‘superior’ part of it?

Do we assume divisions by power and importance in a system we fail to see as a whole?

* * *

‘God is not far away from us, altogether apart from the world we can see, touch, hear, smell and taste about us. Rather he awaits us at every instant in our action, in the work of the moment. There is a sense in which he is at the tip of my pen, my spade, my brush, my needle – of my hand and my thought.’

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

We may not live in a place where we can immerse deeply in nature and its creator – but we can create that space within us to discover God’s presence – in the factory, the school, the office, the city street. Even in cities we live with plants and trees and flowers as much as we live with roads and streets and crowds.

Have we re-discovered, during this time of lockdown, that deep connection with God, our interdependence with the natural world, with ourselves and all humanity?

Elaine Cooper

The Five Marks of Mission



The Five Marks of Mission are an important statement on mission. They express the Anglican Communion’s common commitment to, and understanding of, God’s holistic and integral mission. The mission of the Church is the mission of Christ.

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
3. To respond to human need by loving service
4. To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth

Exploring the Fifth Mark of Mission

The fifth Mark of Mission: ‘To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth’. Too often we hear the refrain ‘last, but not least’, yet in the case of the fifth Mark of Mission it is hard to conclude that it was anything other than an afterthought; the other four Marks of Mission were conceived as a complete summary of Anglican mission in 1984, whilst the fifth was tacked on at the bottom, later, in 1990. Yet perhaps this position at number five was prescient, not because it sits as the lowest priority for mission, but precisely because it undergirds the rest; there can be no mission without a decent planet to do it on. Yet as we reap the harvest of both this impending climate crisis and our present health crisis, we find that within our refusal to consider ecology integral to human development, we sowed the seeds of destruction.

Christianity, which permitted a faulty idea of 'dominion' over nature to take hold in the West, takes some blame. We reduced the full 'creation' to mere 'material' for our benefit and mastery; forests, lakes, mountains, in our faulty vision, were reduced to mere timber, irrigation and minerals, and above all, profit. They had no intrinsic value or integrity in their own right. Yet now, as truly apocalyptic scenarios loom before us and the generations to come, 'safeguarding creation' can no longer be considered as a Mark of Mission alongside the other four, but the basis of the other four.

Thus 'Safeguarding creation' is integral to how we 'challenge unjust structures [and] violence, and pursue peace' (fourth Mark). Firstly because it is the poorest nations and peoples that are hit hardest by the effects of environmental damage now, but as the crisis accelerates, inequalities will be entrenched between those with access to basic necessities in likely 'fortress cities' and those resorting to violence to obtain them. So, environmental care 'responds to human need' (third Mark) and not just our needs now, but the generations to come. What needs are more basic than clean water, breathable air, workable soil and tolerable temperatures? And environmental care is essential to 'teaching, baptising and nurturing new believers' (second Mark).

Early Christians knew that alongside the 'book of Scripture', God was revealed too in 'the book of nature'. Natural beauty, the fruits of the earth and the order of the cosmos illuminated a Creator who was good, nurturing and wise. Baptism reminds us meanwhile, that, like all the sacraments, it is through material reality that God's saving power is known, not by escaping it.

Yet above all we fail to 'proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom' (first Mark) if we see it limited only to humans. God's reign is good news for all creation: Christ's death was to reconcile all things, whether things on earth, or things in heaven (Colossians 1.20). The entire universe shares in the Logos 'through whom all

things were made' (John 1.3) and the Spirit who renews the face of the earth (Psalm 104.30), and through whom the whole creation, suns and planets, seas and shores, winds and rains, beasts, and fish and birds, sings praise and exalts God ('The Song of the Three'). Our proclamation ought to harmonise with that of all creation, including the sorrow and repentance as the creation groans and languishes at present.

To 'safeguard creation' is therefore to achieve other missional goals, and every human activity, mission included, has to assess how far it harms or heals creation. We cannot afford to separate the creation from the activity we do within it, and if these scales do not urgently fall from our eyes, then any consideration of mere human mission might soon be obsolete.

Fr Joe Moore

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Please note: The views in the articles of the magazine reflect the opinions of the writers and not necessarily those of the editorial board.



FOR OUR YOUNGER READERS

Psalm of Creation

For Brother Sun and Sister Moon
And all the stars on high,
We praise you, Loving God.

For fire and water, wind and snow,
For earth and sea and sky,
We praise you, Loving God.

For trees and flowers, fruit and veg,
For wheat and rice and peas,
We praise you, Loving God.

For fish and dolphins, lions, giraffes,
For beetles, birds and bees,
We praise you, Loving God.

For our brothers and sisters of every nation,
We praise you, God, for your creation.
We praise you, Loving God.

Creator God,
We want to say 'Thank you'
for the wonderful world you have made
for us to live in.
Thank you that you continue to care for it
and all its people and creatures.
There is so much in life for us to enjoy.
Help us to show our love for you
by caring for the earth
so that it is not spoiled for ourselves and others.
We ask in Jesus' name.
Amen.

Elaine Cooper

Mary, Queen of All Creation

From the Priest Administrator of the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham

I was delighted when Fr Andrew invited me to contribute to your Parish Magazine. It was also very encouraging to hear that there has been a local revival of the Walsingham Cell at Croydon Minster, partnering with St Michael's, West Croydon and St Alban's, South Norwood. The network of Cells around the country and overseas unites thousands and pilgrims in a fellowship of prayer and of devotion to Our Lady of Walsingham and gives members the opportunity to strengthen and renew the spiritual benefits of pilgrimage to the Shrine.

Thank you to all who support the Shrine and pray for its work in your parish.

Walsingham is set in one of the most beautiful parts of the country. North Norfolk may not have majestic hills to boast about, but its rural landscape and wide skies attract many thousands of tourists and visitors at all times of the year.

We sing in the Walsingham Pilgrim Hymn of Our Lady's appearing 'in Stiffkey's fair vale', and as pilgrims approach the Shrine, they are greeted by a stunning view across that vale, with the River Stiffkey flowing gently through it. It makes for a beautiful welcome to England's Nazareth provided by nature itself.

I was interested to hear that the theme for this edition of the Parish Magazine is 'Care for our Common Home'. This coincides with the theme of the 2020 Pilgrimage season at the Shrine which is 'Mary, Queen of All Creation'. Sadly,



due to the pandemic, we have not been able to explore the riches of this title, one of many attributed to Our Lady, and so it is good to have this opportunity to reflect on its importance, especially at this time of crisis.

In the Creed, we proclaim the faith of the Church and our belief in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, through whom all things were made. We profess that the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, by the power of the Holy Spirit, was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states that 'Creation is the foundation of all God's saving plans, the beginning of the history of salvation that culminates in Christ... from the beginning, God envisaged the glory of the new creation in Christ'.

The coming into the world of Christ, the new creation, the Word made flesh, is made possible by Mary's 'yes' to the Creator himself. The 17th-century Anglican bishop and scholar, Lancelot Andrewes, describes Mary as 'the Land of Promise, the good earth which brings forth the Saviour'.

The beauty of creation speaks powerfully to us of the love and beauty of God himself and of the dignity he has bestowed on all men and women made in his image. God has given us the responsibility of stewardship of creation, and current concerns about the environment highlight the need to reflect on the consequences of neglecting or abusing what has been entrusted to us by God.

In the opening words of his Encyclical letter *Laudato si*, Pope Francis recalls the words of St Francis of Assisi in his Canticle of the Creatures, in which the saint reminds us that our common home is 'like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us'. The Pope goes on to say that this sister 'now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her'.

The focus of pilgrimage to Walsingham is the Holy House, a replica of the house of Mary in Nazareth in which she received the Angel's message that she was to be the Mother of God's only Son. Mary's house was, of course, also her home, the place where she spent her childhood, where she grew up under the watchful care of her parents, where she learned to live in communion with others and found holiness through that experience. She went on to become the Mother of Jesus within the Holy Family and indeed the Mother of all Christians, the worldwide family of the Church. Mary teaches us through her own experience and holiness how to care for and protect, not only our own families, but the family of humanity, not only our own homes but our common home, the world in which we live.

As God entrusted Mary with his only Son, so he entrusts her to us as brothers and sisters in Christ. Mary's example of love and care is not just a virtue for us to admire. It is one we are invited to imitate and live out in our daily lives. The recent pandemic has reminded us so powerfully not only of how connected we are to each other, but how we need one another and how we have a shared responsibility for others and for creation, precious gifts which in his providence he has entrusted to us.

If, as St Francis clearly believed, our common home (creation) really is 'like a sister' who is crying out to us, then we all have a responsibility to care and to protect her, and to renew our awareness of the part we can all play to ease her suffering.

May Our Lady of Walsingham, Queen of All Creation, pray for us and help us to look forward in hope to a better future and for the coming of God's Kingdom of justice, peace, love and beauty.

Fr Kevin Smith
Priest Administrator

The Orthodox Church and the Environment

As long ago as 1989 the senior bishop of the Orthodox Church, the Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios I, called for all Orthodox to keep 1 September as a day of special prayer for the salvation and protection of God's creation. His successor, Patriarch Bartholomew (*pictured right*), has been tireless in promoting environmental matters.



A sense of the Orthodox concern for the environment and attitude to creation can be seen by looking at the service of Vespers, or Evening Prayer, with the particular texts for 1 September. The Orthodox Church begins the church year on this date, unlike us who begin four Sundays before Christmas. The Jewish New Year also begins in September and in a number of ways Orthodox worship is closer to Jewish worship than Western Christian worship. Traditionally creation was believed to have taken place in the autumn for the quaint reason that fruits would have been available to eat at that season. So September was already associated with God's act of creation.

Like the Jewish day, the Orthodox day begins at sunset, so the first service of the day is Vespers. Those of you who are used to Evensong at the Minster would find it a rather different experience – both services include the evening canticle the *Nunc Dimittis*, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace'. Otherwise there are no common texts. There is also a certain amount of movement as the priest goes round the church at various points and the congregation turn to follow him.

When I first experienced Orthodox worship I found it particularly odd that the congregation did not join in saying or singing the words. There is no attempt to make

sure everyone can follow the words, as the texts are so elaborate. I have since realised that it is a peculiarity of Anglicans of all different traditions that the congregation is expected to follow all the words. Other denominations are not so concerned. But members of an Orthodox congregation certainly feel they are participating by praying during the services and joining in the ritual gestures such as crossing themselves. Typically they stand throughout.

The services are holistic in a way we are not used to, involving symbolism, icons, incense and movement as well as words and music. This emphasises the goodness of physical creation as created and redeemed by God in which all the senses are used in worship. There is rather more emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit than in formal Western worship.

The service of Vespers always begins with a prayer to the Holy Spirit:

'O Heavenly King, Comforter, the Spirit of truth, present in all places and filling all things; treasury of good things and giver of life, come and dwell in us and purify us from every stain, and of your goodness save our souls.'

Vespers continues with Psalm 104. This is a very beautiful meditation on the wonder and unity of creation under God and includes the belief that all creation is the work of the Spirit:

'When you send forth your spirit, they are created;
You renew the face of the earth.'

Then the priest goes round the church censing the congregation and the icons. While he does so various psalm verses are recited, including from Psalm 141:

'Let my prayer rise like incense before you; and the lifting of my hands an evening sacrifice.'

The use of this verse at Evening Prayer dates from the earliest day of Christianity. Special texts for the day are sung in between the psalm verses. On 1 September the text is:

‘O Christ, who brought all things into existence from nothing, and with ineffable wisdom gave to each one to accomplish unerringly the goal which you laid down in the beginning, O Saviour, Lover of humankind, as you are powerful, bless the whole creation which you fashioned.’

Also from the early period is the bringing in of the evening light. The choir sings the short 2nd-century hymn ‘O gladsome light, O grace, of God the Father’s face’, during which the priest brings a lighted candle out from behind the screen. The hymn is 247 in *New English Hymnal* and has been sung by the Minster Choir in a setting by Charles Wood.

After three Biblical readings specific for the day (including Leviticus 26, Isaiah 63 and Jeremiah 2), the service continues with various prayers and hymns including the *Nunc Dimittis*. There are further prayers and on 1 September this prayer is included:

‘Threats and scourges and destruction hang over us, Lord, because of the multitude of our transgressions; for we have sinned and transgressed and gone far from you, and we are affected and afflicted by dire perils; but deliver us, Lord from dangers that beset us, and keep the whole structure of the earth unharmed, granting equable breaths of wind and ever-flowing springs of water for our safe-keeping and salvation, O Lover of humankind.’

There are a number of ways in which Orthodox worship has something to teach us about our relationship with the created world.

It is closer to Jewish worship and earliest Christian worship. There has been a tendency in the last five hundred years in the West to imagine that words and

individual experience are the most authentic forms of prayer. This was not always the case. Orthodox worship involves the entire physical being of the worshippers, with music, incense, physical movement and visual imagery. Far from being individual, it is taking the worshippers out of themselves into the reality of God. Worship is not primarily individual but that of the whole church, both those present and the whole company of heaven, represented by the icons of the saints that fill all Orthodox churches. It is a pledge of the physical creation redeemed, united in the worship of God the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Jon Blanchard

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Thoughts and Meditation on Life and Creation

'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...'

'And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years..."'

Genesis 1.14

'For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.'

Ecclesiastes 3.1

Woods and forests are the lungs, the very breath and soul of the planet. Spending time in woodland is restorative for both body and spirit. You can tell the seasons from the trees and hedgerows. From the soft green new growth of spring, the lush warmth of summer, the abundance and freshness of autumn and the cold, still expectancy of winter, the natural world reflects the story of our lives in their changing patterns and seasons. And underneath it all, the earth beneath our feet, constant and permanent throughout the world.

Lord God, Thank you for the times and seasons of my life. Be with me every step of the way on my journey. Be to me the very breath of my life, and like the earth, my sure foundation and constant support. May I rely on your promise, that you will be with me always, even to the end of time. Amen.

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'And God said, "Let the earth bring forth creatures of every kind..."' *Genesis 1.24*

'So God created human kind in his image...' *Genesis 1.27*

The world supports some 8.7 million species and of this 76% are animals, each individual creature separate, distinct and unique, beautifully adapted to its habitat and surroundings, vital to the ecosystem in which it thrives and survives. In all its

wonderful diversity, the natural world is constantly evolving and adapting in an ever-changing environment.

Lord God, I pray for my family and friends, and for all I come in contact with in my daily life. Thank you for their diversity and uniqueness. Help me to acknowledge and accept the differences that challenge my relationship with others, that may I learn to value and embrace the common humanity which unites us all and draws us together in your love. Amen.

*

'God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind...' *Genesis 1.25*

'The Lord God said to the serpent, "Cursed are you among all animals and among all wild creatures. Upon your belly you will go and dust you shall eat..."'

Genesis 3.14

Let's face it, though, some creatures are more touchy-feely than others! You can't cuddle a crocodile or get emotionally attached to a wasp. Some aren't pretty to look at and some are downright revolting! Have you ever seen a snake dislocating its jaw to swallow prey three times its size, or watched a spider entrap and devour its next meal? You may consider making a trip halfway around the world to see an elephant or big cat, but would you make such a journey for a rodent? Yet all creatures are created by God, and all life is a miracle from God.

Lord God, I pray for all those who feel unloved and rejected. For all those marginalised by society who see only doors marked 'No Entry'. Help me to accept and respect all people, regardless of race, religion or background. May I see your gift of life in all, knowing that all life is created and loved by you. Amen.

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'And God said, "... let the birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky..."'

Genesis 1.20

'Even the sparrow finds her a house and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young.' *Psalms 84.3*

The thing about birds is that they have one object in life: perpetuation of the species. Their whole existence revolves around attracting a mate, building a nest, incubating eggs, feeding, protecting, and teaching their young how to survive. Even when they are singing they are courting or protecting territory. Most birds are brilliant parents. Some, like swans and puffins, mate for life, while others are more fickle. Some individuals have been observed to grieve for dead partners or predated young. Bird song is the joyous melody of woodland, field and garden.

Lord God, Thank you for all those who have loved and nurtured me throughout my life. For those who teach, instruct and inspire. I pray for all children in the world, that every child may be loved and cherished. May they each grow in stature and confidence, eager to learn, and able to reach their full potential, free from violence and abuse. Amen.

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‘God made... everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind...’ *Genesis 1.25*

‘The ants are a people without strength, yet they provide food in the summer.’
Proverbs 30.25

There are approximately 1.46 billion insects to every human on the planet. Individually they are not very interesting unless you get up close and personal or view them through a microscope to study their complexity. However, most of our food relies on bees and butterflies for pollination. Ants and worms work through the soil and dispose of decaying vegetation. Most insects and invertebrates are themselves food for birds and small mammals. Insects are so small we often see them as a nuisance, but they are a vital invisible workforce that sustains the natural environment. (Just don't get me started on slugs and snails in the veg patch!)

Lord God, I pray for all who find life a struggle and their work tough, challenging or tedious. For those who care for us when we are sick, those who provide our food and necessities, and those who protect and maintain our communities. Give them patience

and courage to face the challenges they meet and the strength to continue their work day by day. Amen.

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‘Then God said, “Let the earth put forth vegetation, plants yielding seed and fruit trees of every kind.”’ *Genesis 1.11*

‘Consider the lilies of the field... even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these.’ *Matthew 6.28*

Flowers and plants are the jewels in nature's crown. From tiny forget-me-nots and heartsease, abundant roses and foxgloves, to exquisitely intricate orchids and lilies, bright red poppies and delicate bluebells, they punctuate the countryside and fill our lives with beauty, colour and fragrance. They are a never-ending source of joy and wonder.

Lord God, thank you for your precious gift of life and for everything that makes it good. For nature, music and art. For the generosity of friends, the kindness of neighbours and the smile of a stranger. I hold before you in prayer all those that live in the darkness of fear and oppression, those affected by war and conflict, and those fleeing violence and persecution. For the hopeless, the homeless and the hungry. May they find relief from their suffering and peace in their hearts. Help me to find ways of spreading the joy of your gospel of love and grace. Amen.

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‘Thus the heavens and the earth were finished.’ *Genesis 2.1*

‘All the land mourns, and all who live in it languish together with the wild animals and the birds of the air, even the fish of the sea are perishing.’ *Hosea 4.3*

‘The seed shrivels under the clods... Even the wild animals cry to you because the watercourses are dried up, and the fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness.’
Joel 1.17, 20

We cannot consider God's creation without looking at the bigger picture. Our oceans may be teeming with fish and marine life, but they are being plundered and over-fished to satisfy our insatiable appetite for seafood. Our land and seas are being polluted by chemicals, and millions of tons of plastic and waste are discarded each day. Vast swathes of forests are destroyed to make way for more lucrative crops such as palm oil, maize, cotton and tobacco. Redevelopment rips through the countryside, devastating everything in its path. Intensive farming is destructive to the land, and to the biodiversity of the wildlife that it supports. Many species, such as elephants, leopards, hedgehogs and bees, are in such decline as to be severely endangered and on the brink of extinction. Global warming and climate change pose a real and immanent threat to our survival. As a species, humans have a capacity as much to harm and destroy as to heal and repair. Individually and collectively, we must all take responsibility for our actions and the way we live. We must be mindful that everything we buy, use, own or consume, everything we waste or discard, each journey we take and every decision we make has a direct impact on the environment. In order to bring the planet back from the edge of destruction, we must start to reduce our consumption and our reliance on fossil fuels. We cannot deprive our children and future generations of the opportunity to enjoy the bounteous gifts that have been given to us for safe-keeping. The time to act is now. But we cannot do it on our own. Only with God's help can we have hope in the future.

Lord God, You formed the earth out of darkness and gave it light and life. Help us to be good stewards of the riches you have entrusted into our care, so it may be protected and treasured for generations. Come into your world that it may once again reflect your glory and your abundant love. Amen.

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'God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.'

Susan Williams

St Francis in Lockdown

Now that the realities of lockdown have woven their way into our daily lives, it's only prudent to be aware of what it means for us as a society. Many people I speak to or hear from in the media, frequently express their concern about its implications, on our families, our income and security around what we've always been certain of. We have had to adjust in ways we may never have anticipated before and in some cases, have had to let go of things we've always taken for granted. Yet, during trying times we are people of faith, are we not?

As Christians we naturally look to scripture, to each other and to examples of those who've come before, who can teach us something about letting go of what's not necessarily important and the appreciation of what we already have.

I was recently enlightened about the legacy of the 13th century's Francis of Assisi, Patron saint of the natural world. His alternative orthodoxy, practices of contemplation and lived kenosis, expressing itself in radical compassion, particularly for the socially marginalised, is something to inspire and guide us and most especially today.

Founder of the Franciscan Order, the woman's Order of Saint Claire and the Third Order of Saint Francis, he notably renounced the trappings of wealth to which he was born and embraced the simplicity of piety, in order that he be open to receiving the grace of God and to continue his work without worldly vices. Greek in origin, 'kenosis' is a word that denotes 'the act of self-emptying'.



Icon from the Chiesa di Santa Maria Maddalena, Ravenna

Renata Sedmakova / shutterstock.com

Has not lockdown taught each one of us, from the most wealthy to the least, to let go of something? Even if it is to readjust in the smallest of ways, it's a commonality of contemporary life we all now share; a common thread that we can choose to bring us together or drive us further apart. By evoking his 800 year-old wisdom, my favourite quote by St Francis addresses even those with the biggest doubts and worries at this time; 'all the darkness in the world cannot put out the flame of a single candle.'

What is it then in these modern times, that we may receive in return, when most man-made systems, distractions, comings and goings are seemingly and most suddenly unreliable and uncertain?

In contributing to this month's magazine and from my own lockdown experience, I am reminded of the peaceful affect it has had on me from its inception. I was sitting in the garden on a March spring evening; a clear star-lit night, with my cup of tea in hand and immediately, I became aware of the silence. Perhaps you too remember a similar occasion when you suddenly became aware of nature's reprieve. On this particular evening, the birds had gone to sleep, the sky was clear of pollution and without an aircraft in sight. The walls of mine and the neighbouring houses did not reverberate with the previously familiar echoes of traffic or the humdrum of voices in the streets, that often plague our metropolis into the late hours. It was like the world had become frozen in time. I then took a sip from my cup and made a point of doing so, ever so silently, for fear of disturbing the peace! I felt very blessed for the experience.

My mind then began to wonder and being an avid nerd on topics like history, I asked myself the question, 'When last was the world so very still?' We all I am sure, have seen videos of nature taking over parts of the man-made world, go viral online; from goats invading a Welsh town centre, penguins exploring staff workstations at Chicago Zoo because their keepers needed to keep them occupied, to lions snoozing across roads normally thronged by cars in South Africa's national parks, nature certainly did come out to play as well as to live. Again.

Given a third of the earth's nations were in lockdown at the time, I while sipping my tea still very quietly, came to the conclusion that the last time the world was so very quiet was probably before the height of the Industrial Revolution! Reflecting on our industrial origins, there was not even a steam boat, a dirty coal-based cotton mill or millions of British homes spewing smoke from chimneys. Not before the last seventy years of capitalist development and peace in Europe, or before the last world war and even the Great War before that, or even when Victoria sat on the throne, had the world stood still for so long. Think about it.

I've been asking myself recently and I'd like to ask you, the reader, 'What does this mean for us spiritually? Does Our Lord have His Hand in this most unprecedented time in our human and natural histories?'

Not only has St Francis demonstrated the practice of letting go in order to receive but in the very least, to appreciate the gift of what's immediately at hand for us all - God's creation. Has his spirit embraced us at this time of change? Have you become more aware of your appreciation of what we can receive, not necessarily through waiting for answers to prayer but through what is immediately on hand to accept? Our beautiful world!

I leave you with one more appropriate quote by St Francis and give you time hereafter to reflect; 'Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Earth our Mother who sustains and governs us.' Sustain and govern us she certainly does and so apt a reminder as lockdown.

Craig Holmes, fellow parishioner



Gilt of Cain

Those of you who are regular readers of my column will know that I am a great lover of religious art of the 13th and 14th centuries and, whilst also having a fondness for 17th-century art, I rarely discuss modern works. This month, however, I have chosen to share with you a 21st-century piece.

With the Black Lives Matter movement so prominent in today's society many works of art are being re-evaluated and, as we see in the news, removed from public view. My thoughts immediately turned to *Gilt of Cain*, which is situated in Fen Court, a garden in a quiet passageway off Fenchurch Street in the City of London.

This modern and powerful artwork is the result of a collaboration between sculptor Michael Visocchi and poet Lemn Sissay. The sculpture commemorates the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade in 1807, which began the emancipation of slaves throughout the British Empire. It therefore rightly deserves

to remain. It was unveiled by Archbishop Desmond Tutu on 4th September 2008, the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade.

The granite sculpture is composed of a group of seventeen columns surrounding a podium. The work invites you to make your own conclusions as to what it represents. The podium, whilst resembling an ecclesiastical pulpit, can also be seen as a slave auctioneer's stance, whilst the columns, which evoke stems of sugar cane, are positioned to suggest either an anonymous crowd of bidders or perhaps a congregation gathered to listen to a speaker. Sugar is a commodity used on a daily basis, and whilst we may not like to acknowledge it, we need to remember that the 18th-century sugar merchants were all slave owners.

Extracts from Sissay's poem, *Gilt of Cain*, are engraved into the granite, wrapping around it. The poem skilfully combines the coded language of the City's Stock Exchange trading floor with biblical Old Testament texts and references. Here we can recognise a definite play on words. The way 'Cain' is spelt by Sissay is the son of Adam and Eve, and the first person to commit murder when he killed his brother Abel; however, the word 'cane' also refers to the sugar. Likewise Sissay has spelt 'gilt' with no 'u' meaning the material, whilst with a 'u' refers to the feelings of Cain having committed fratricide.

Fen Court was once the site of the graveyard of St Gabriel Fenchurch, and a churchyard was recorded on this site as early as 1331. St Gabriel was one of the many churches lost to the Great Fire of London in 1666, and you can still see some of the fading graves dotted around the garden. In 2008 the site was re-landscaped with new paving, seating and planting, and is now a garden dedicated both to the people buried here and also to the abolition of the slave trade, but you may be wondering why *Gilt of Cain* has been placed here.

Fen Court is now in the Parish of St Edmund the King and St Mary Woolnoth, Lombard Street. St Mary Woolnoth has a strong historical connection with the

The Tale of the Hemmans Family

Many gravestones and memorials were lost when the area around Croydon Minster was redesigned in the 1960s to allow the construction of the Roman Way dual carriageway. One such stone commemorated the Hemmans family.

On this Croydon memorial was the following information: 'Samuel Hemmans, late of Chatham Dockyard, d June 14th 1819 aged 74, Ann his widow d Oct 22, 1833 aged 81, Susannah Hinton her sister, d Dec 18th 1845, Samuel Hood Hemmans, Lieut. R.N. d at Ceylon, May 2 1854 aged 62, Mary Eliza Hemmans, d Feb 15th 1872, aged 81, Thos. Hinton Hemmans, Lieut.-Colonel d Nov 17th 1873, aged 79, Ann Hemmans, d April 1 1875 aged 75.'

Strean's Victorian history book *Croydon in the Past* added a note beside this memorial entry. He noted that the Hemmans family were originally from Mitcham where they ran a brewery in Lower Mitcham. He also wrote that William Hood Hemman, the brothers' grandfather, was churchwarden of Mitcham Parish Church in 1820 and that his name was cast on one of the bells. William was buried right by Mitcham Church together with his wife. That memorial refers to 'other family members who lie in sacred places'.

There is much Hemman and Hinton family history on the Croydon stone but this tale will focus on the two military brothers, Samuel Hood Hemman and Thomas Hinton Hemman. Both men were sons of Samuel, the first name on the memorial. Their father was the Master Attendant of the docks at Chatham. He was responsible for managing the ships in harbour and seeing to the maintenance of the ships laid up there. He had previously been employed in similar positions at Sheerness and Plymouth, retiring in 1816 and eventually moving to Croydon. With a father so involved with the sea, it was no surprise that Samuel Hood should join the Navy. This he did in 1806 on 10th July when, at the age of 14, he became

a Volunteer 1st Class on HMS Boreas under Captain Robert Scott, with a crew of 200 officers and men. Horatio Nelson had previously served as Senior Naval Officer on this craft from 1784 to 1787. Samuel quickly saw active service in the capture of a privateer ship *La Victoire*. Shortly after this, however, disaster hit when the *Boreas* struck rocks off Guernsey and sank. Only 68 of her crew survived, which thankfully included Samuel; sadly, but in true Navy tradition, the Commander 'went down with his ship'. Samuel, who by this time had risen to the rank of Midshipman, was then set to work on a variety of ships before being promoted to Lieutenant in 1813. Those ships included HMS *Resolution*, HMS *Pompee*, HMS *Volage* and HMS *Resistance*, before he was appointed to HMS *Undaunted*. It was while a member of this crew that Samuel became part of a significant historical event. HMS *Undaunted* was part of the British fleet which harried and attacked the French. In November 1813, after attacking the French port of Port-la-Nouvelle, its Commander Captain Usher noted in his report that they captured two vessels and destroyed five. This brought to a total of 70 ships either destroyed or captured in the previous 10 months that he had been in command of the vessel.

In April 1814, whilst stationed off the coast off Marseilles, the crew noticed unusual lights one evening from the shore. The next morning they were approached by a boat flying a flag of truce whose crew explained that Napoleon had been taken prisoner and that the captain of the ship was to go ashore to meet the military governor of the town. Whilst ashore, orders came through that HMS *Undaunted* was to sail to Saint Tropez and thence to Frejus, where Napoleon was lodged in a hotel. On the evening of April 28th, Napoleon, some of his followers and various representatives of the French allies boarded the ship and set sail for the island of Elba. Five days later Napoleon disembarked onto the island to begin his first period of exile. After disgorging its infamous passenger, HMS *Undaunted* continued its Mediterranean patrols and did not return to this country until October 1815, when the crew were paid off. I think the crew, including Samuel, would

have made much of the spectacle of seeing Napoleon deposited on an island and, most probably, the prospect of a free drink or two whilst describing the events. Of course Napoleon didn't stay in exile very long. He escaped after 300 days of exile, returning to raise his armies before he was finally and comprehensively beaten at Waterloo in the June of 1815.

Samuel, meanwhile, continued his career in the Navy. He joined HMS Bulwark first, then HMS Curlew. In 1820, in this vessel, he saw action in Ras-al-Khyma in the Persian Gulf, now part of the United Arab Emirates. Here they fought pirates, eventually seizing their stronghold and capturing a large quantity of treasure. From 1824 to 1827 Samuel was part of the crew of HMS Blanche stationed in South America. His final posting was with HMS Herald, which in 1829 sailed to St Petersburg, Cartagena (a Colombian Caribbean port), Quebec and home. The crew were paid off in early 1830 and that was the end of Samuel's 14 years at sea. 'Join the Navy and see the World' was a late 20th-century recruiting slogan for the senior service. Samuel certainly achieved that in his time on the ocean waves in the early 19th.

That same year he retired from the Navy he married Emma Jane Weatherall in Gillingham near the Chatham docks, and they went on to have five children in the next fourteen years. Their third child, another Samuel, was baptised in 1838, in Greenock, Scotland. This was because the family had relocated there with Lt. Samuel acquiring a new job as an Emigration Agent at the port with the firm of Goode and Lawrence.

We know nothing more about Samuel himself other than that he died on May 22nd 1854 aged 61. The transcription from the old gravestone must surely be wrong because it stated Samuel died in Ceylon. A genealogical search revealed he died in Newington, Walworth, South London. His wife Emma died in 1886 in St Lawrence, Kent, aged 84. Samuel is remembered on the Croydon memorial

where his parents were buried together with his aunt. His brother Thomas, the other military figure, was buried in the family grave in Croydon. He always kept the family property at 13 George Street and died there.

Thomas had a much more low-key life in the military than his sailor brother. He was in the 78th Highland Regiment, later the Seaforth Highlanders. He was an ensign from May 1811, Lieutenant from 1813, Captain from 1826 and Brevet Major from 1841. The regiment departed for a tour in Ceylon in 1826, not returning until 1838. The 78th are best known for their defence of Lucknow in India during the siege of 1857. Thomas had long since retired, back in 1843. His time with the 78th Regiment in Ireland and Ceylon never saw active service. He was unmarried, sharing 13 George Street with Mary and Ann, both spinsters, and who are buried in the family grave too.

The family memorial in Croydon Parish churchyard held so many memories. Thomas, telling all and sundry about his time in the 78th; his brother coming to Croydon and recollecting his memories of years at sea. Their father, in his lifetime, was proud of how well he had done in life and telling stories about his boys serving the crown and travelling around the world. "He got that rotter Napoleon onto that island. Did I ever tell you that?" Let's raise a glass to the Hemmans family, a Croydon family with aspirations and loyal service. Cheers.

David Morgan

The Church Times

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Book Review: Saying Yes to Life

Ruth Valerio, *Saying Yes to Life:*

Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent Book 2020 (SPCK)

Lent 2020 may be well and truly over, but what a Lent it was. At mid-point – Refreshment Sunday – public worship was suspended and Church and society entered a long period of hibernation; a time of withdrawal and consolidation, not unlike the experience of Lent and Holy Saturday, from which we are only just emerging.

One of the features of lockdown was that many people started to feel more deeply connected with the creation than they normally might: birdsong was heard; the air felt clearer; toxic emission levels dropped; the skies cleared; those with gardens were tilling the soil far more. There was something of the Garden of Eden returning.

After more than two centuries of doing damage to the creation we glimpsed the possibility that through a seismic change of human behaviour the situation is not irredeemable, but also that we must act fast. This hope is shared around the world by millions of people, irrespective of faith conviction or ethical stance and across the generations. In the Lent book commissioned by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Ruth Valerio, the Global Advocacy and Influencing Director at Tearfund, explores the relationship between our care for creation and our Christian discipleship. The message she has fits beautifully in Lent, with its emphasis on abstinence, amendment of life and almsgiving, but is much broader and deeper than simply one season. Jesus declares that he 'came that you may have life, and have it abundantly' (John 10.10). Valerio prompts us to consider what abundant life looks like, not solely in terms of personal spiritual wellbeing but for the whole creation.

Valerio's method is to take each of the days of the account of creation in Genesis 1. Christians relate to that account in different ways, from those who take it as a

scientific account of the origins of the universe, to those who think it is little more than a fable that we should leave well behind us. Valerio does something far more fruitful, practical and arguably truer to the text. The driving message of Genesis 1 is not that it is a science manual to be adopted or disregarded but that it speaks of the gift of God's life infused in the creation, a gift of which we too are recipients, made as we are in the image and likeness of God.

It is as recipients of the gift of life that we human beings are part of the creation and not remote from it. The seven days of creation (well, six days plus the Sabbath day – which itself is integral to creation) speak of the diversity of the life God brings into being and names into existence, from the elemental forces of water, darkness and light, to the beauty and intricacy of the birds of the air, or the delicacy and wonder of the plant life.

What does it mean then for us as creatures and Christians as we behold the created order, marred and despoiled as it is? We cannot remove ourselves from the consequences of the damage of creation in the past, not least because we continue it now: when I drive my car I burn fossil fuels; I use a mobile phone made in part from precious metals and resources that have been extracted from the earth; when I drink my café latte I am drinking a product that has been shipped at a cost to the creation, and probably at the expense of a local environment or ecosystem where coffee has become a monoculture.

We are all bound up in this, and we have come to believe that there is little we can do so might as well carry on as we are. But that is not good enough. We ignore Sabbath and never give the creation a break, unless it has been enforced upon us in a lockdown.

So what might a Christian do with all this? Valerio relates themes of light, water, land, the seasons, other creatures, humankind, Sabbath rest and resurrection hope to matters of environmental, ethical and social concern. With reflections from around the globe, not least from some of the poorest parts of the world – and climate change hits the poor hardest – Valerio invites us to pray, to give and

to take practical action. As Archbishop Justin says of the book, it is 'perfect for individuals and groups to think, reflect, pray and be challenged together'.

And here's the challenge: how do I, as a creature of God, made in God's image and likeness, and as a Christian, say 'yes to life' and care for God's creation responsibly: what will my behaviour, habits and action look like when I do that? Care of the creation is for life, not just for lockdown...

Fr Andrew

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Times of Services

*** REGULAR SCHEDULE IS CURRENTLY SUSPENDED ***

Croydon Minster

Morning Prayer, weekdays (excluding Tuesday), 8.30am

Sunday

8.00am - Eucharist

10.00am - Sung Eucharist;

Creche (ages 0 – 4), Kingfishers (4–10) and Blue Door Group (11+)

6.30pm - Choral Evensong

Monday

11.00am - Eucharist

Tuesday

8.30am - Eucharist

9.00am - Morning Prayer

11.00am - Eucharist

5.30pm - Choral Evensong sung by the Boy Choristers *

Wednesday

11.00am - Eucharist (Book of Common Prayer)

5.30pm - Choral Evensong sung by the Girl Choristers *

Thursday

7.00pm - Choral Evensong (men's voices) *

Friday

11.00am - Eucharist

Saturday

10.00am - Eucharist

* Term time only

St George's, Waddon

Sunday

10.00am - Parish Eucharist, Noah's Ark (ages 5–11)

Thursday

10.00am - Eucharist with Discussion (Traditional Language)