

Christ Church Freemantle

Sunday 13th September – 14th Sunday after Trinity

Creationtide

I am glad of this opportunity to make a contribution, following the very thoughtful piece from Eileen last week, which was about the Jubilee for the Earth, as part of this season of Creationtide, which culminates on October 4th, St Francis' day. In so doing, I draw mainly on a work which moved me greatly when I first read it a few years ago: "On Care for our Common Home," an encyclical letter which Pope Francis addressed, not just to Roman Catholics, but to all people, in May 2015.

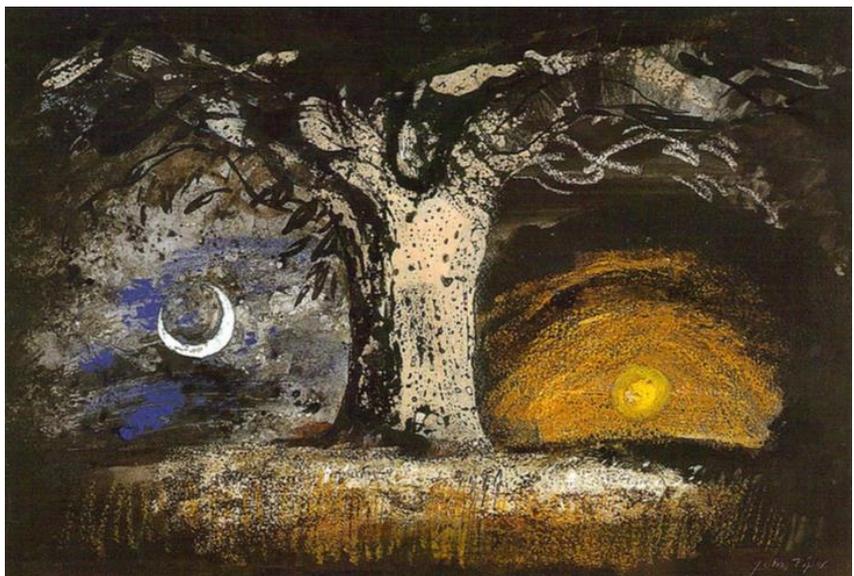
Pope Francis began his letter with the opening words of Saint Francis' Canticle to the Sun: "Laudato si, mi signore" or "Praise be to you, my lord." We have an adaptation in

English of this beautiful canticle in the hymn "All creatures of our God and King, lift up your voice and with us sing..."

Saint Francis believed that God was present in all of his creation. When he spoke of Brother Sun and Sister Moon, and spoke

kindly to the animals, this was not an affectation. Human beings are a part of this Earth, from the elements of which our bodies are made, and into which our bodies will return. We share the earth with all living creatures; it is our common home, where all creatures belong to God's family.

In the creation story in Genesis, which Eileen summarised for us last week, God gives humankind dominion over the earth, and enjoins us to use its resources. This means that we can take and use what we need, but we must do so responsibly; it does not mean that we can pillage the planet and leave a trail of destruction behind us, as the powerful have been doing for centuries. The pace of destruction is accelerating, driven by technology which has been developed to maximise extraction, and by the belief that individuals have the



right to maximise their profits and wealth, regardless of the consequences to other people and to other species, and to the sustainability of the planet itself.

Pope Francis writes: “If we acknowledge the value and the fragility of nature and, at the same time, our God-given abilities, we can finally leave behind the modern myth of unlimited material progress. A fragile world, entrusted by God to human care, challenges us to devise intelligent ways of directing, developing, and limiting our power.” (paragraph 78.)



The time for action is now, before resource depletion, habitat destruction, global warming and climate change bring about the extinction of more species of plants and animals, and more suffering to the poor and dispossessed people throughout the world.

The need to rebuild economies after the disruption of the present pandemic provides an opportunity to create a sustainable way of life, based on social justice, the sharing of resources, reduced consumption by the rich, and preserving the natural world. But I must ask: Does the world have the leaders who are willing to do this, and are we, as the inhabitants of a rich country, willing to reduce what we consume?

Pope Francis ends “On Care for our Common Home” with this prayer:

“God of love, show us our place in this world, as channels of your love for all the creatures of this earth, for not one of them is forgotten in your sight.

Enlighten those who possess power and money that they may avoid the sin of indifference, that they may love the common good, advance the weak, and care for this world in which we live.

The poor and the earth are crying out. O Lord, seize us with your power and light, help us to protect all life, to prepare for a better future, for the coming of your Kingdom of justice, peace, love, and beauty.

Praise be to you! Amen.”

Steve Evemy