

THE SEASON OF CREATION: A POOR RELATION?

The Season of Creation came and went as seasons do. But as we slipped further beyond the Feast of St Francis of Assisi, I wondered had we, once again, given too little attention to the Reality the season is meant to re-focus for us.

Church people find it hard to believe that the primary revelation of God is written outside of buildings and books; that if we aren't reading the 'precious book' of the natural world, (Laudato Si, 85), the witness of the written text alone will hardly suffice; that when we do not understand our prayer as *always* the prayer of the cosmos our worship loses its 'grandeur' and its roots!

From our perspective we can't help but picture God as an image of ourselves, but if we had any inkling of the mesmeric beauty and complexity of any other creature's life (and we can choose any one of millions), we would have no difficulty reading 'a divine manifestation' there (LS, 221).

'We need to be re-educated in wonder', Pope Benedict wrote in 'Verbum Domini'. And how! If we do not fall in love with the earth, like we once did as children, we can have no access to the God of creation, the one who reveals God-self there. This demands no less of us than 'a profound ecological conversion', (LS 217), a metamorphosis in our way of thinking about 'God' comparable to the caterpillar's liquidising a previous way of life to become what it truly is – a butterfly.

Our line in self-conscious awareness is amazing as one extraordinary strand in the web that is life-on-earth. It is sabotaged, however, by our greed and our unwillingness to live in communion with one another, with 'our Sister, Mother Earth' and all her children (LS 1). 'Can we stop before the abyss?' asked the ageing Pope John Paul in 2001. The signs are not good as we blunder on, enticed by the love words of (unconditional) 'progress' and 'growth'.

The kind of growth that will save our living planet with 'something of God'(LS 221) inscribed in every hair that stirs on every creature, in every last detail however small to our poor eyesight and soundless to our hearing, will be found in our adoption of 'an ecological spirituality' (LS 216). We must become reconciled with creation (LS 218).

The season of Creation is a six week time for us to ponder, apologise, confess, desist, act. It is as essential a season as Advent and Easter but we haven't got that far yet. On the hopeful side, there is no day that does not belong to the season of creation, no star that does not 'get it', no larva that does not know what its living is meant for. Franz Wright puts it like this:

'We speak of heaven who have not yet accomplished

Even this, the holiness of things

Precisely as they are, and never will' ('Prescience').

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