

WEEKLY SERMON

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A Bit of a Mess

After our Sunday Zoom service, we often have a lively discussion and last Sunday was no different. The pandemic, how did it start, whose fault, what needs to change, you can imagine there were plenty of views which got me thinking: surely this is not how it should be?

I thought back to the creation story because surely that's how it should be. God made us in His image out of the dust of the earth; we're made out of the same stuff as the universe.

He set us to work in the garden, to care for it. He introduced us to the animal Kingdom, even let us name all the animals. So, with that in mind and although it doesn't actually say it, we appear to be the stewards of God's creation.

So how are we doing? In agriculture intensive farming does feed us but uses chemicals that can harm the balance of nature to keep the land productive. Deforestation for palm oil, cattle breeding and exotic timber is on the rise.

At the same time, it is reported that in this country between 7 and 10 million tons of food is wasted each year.

What about our wildlife? In September 2020 the World Wildlife Fund released its latest report in which they highlighted the fact that between 1970 and 2016 an average 68% decline in animal population sizes tracked over the period.

Moreover, climate change and biodiversity loss are only two of a host of environmental problems that we are facing: the scourge of plastic; soil degradation; ocean acidification and nitrogen pollution are also huge problems.

As a nation we are hosting the international conference on climate change, in Glasgow later this year. Climate change gets plenty of publicity on the media. The hope is to limit warming to 3C. At 4C warming many scientists believe our civilisation cannot be sustained. It would be a scenario of environmental, social and economic collapse, within the lifetime of today's toddlers.

Christians should put into practice what we preach. The Pope wrote on the subject in his prophetic book *Laudato Si*. He reminds us that our lack of respect for the environment is having the greatest effect on the poor and he calls for an ecological conversion.

We Christians need not only to take responsibility for what we eat, wear, consume, our energy consumption and travel; we also need to lobby world leaders to act similarly, by putting in place policies which will ensure that everyone plays a part in caring for this wonderful creation that God gave us.

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HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES