

Reflection for the Week

Next week - 10th -16th May – is Christian Aid week. In the midst of our crisis it is easy to forget the desperate plight of the world's poorest communities.

In the literature for children, *Letters for creation*, Christian Aid invites us to pray and reflect on the *Canticle of the Sun* by St. Francis of Assisi. You might recognise some of the words from the hymn '*All creatures of our God and King.*'

Canticle of the Sun

*Be praised, my Lord,
for all your creatures,
and first for brother sun,
who makes the day bright and luminous.
He is beautiful and radiant
with great splendour
he is the image of you,
Most High.
Be praised, my Lord,
for sister moon and the stars.
You placed them in the sky,
so bright and twinkling.*

St. Francis believed that everything in the natural world deserves to be valued, which is why he refers to elements of the natural world as 'sister' and 'brother'. Clearly, underlying his choice of words is the idea that we have a relationship with all that exists. His canticle is based on **Psalm 148**.

During this time of lock-down the natural world has been given a rest. I have commonly heard it expressed that people can hear birdsong for the first time in decades, can smell and taste cleaner air, can see the stars in the night sky and that even the colours of spring seem brighter as the natural world is not covered in a fine layer of particulates. I notice that those with gardens have been more engaged in pruning, weeding, tending and planting; processes which help us to deepen our understanding of and affection for nature. One person in the street where I live has dug out and replanted an area of *once-upon-a-time* turfed verge as an act of communal goodwill. There is something about respect for the natural world and reverence for its beauty that brings us together and points us towards an Almighty Creator.

If you check out the Christian Aid website there are lots of interesting resources on climate justice. Perhaps go to:

caid.org.uk/fumes-or-futures

caid.org.uk/window

You can join the global prayer chain for climate justice at:

caid.org.uk/prayerchain

Christian Aid have produced a poster which I would have pinned up on the church noticeboard. It portrays a boy holding a tree sapling in a recycled plastic bottle. In the top right hand corner the poster records an *Ancient Proverb*:

'Treat the Earth well.

It was not given to you by your parents.

It was loaned to you by your children.'

This week we might like to reflect and pray on these words.