

A Leaner and Greener Lent

WEEK 6 10th-16th April

Let the land produce living creatures and let us
make humankind in our image



Read: Genesis 1.24-31

God said, “I command the earth to give life to all kinds of tame animals, wild animals, and reptiles.” And that’s what happened. God made every one of them. Then he looked at what he had done, and it was good. God said, “Now we will make humans, and they will be like us. We will let them rule the fish, the birds, and all other living creatures.”

God created humans to be like himself; he made men and women. God gave them his blessing and said: “Have a lot of children! Fill the earth with people and bring it under your control. Have control over the fish in the ocean, the birds in the sky, and every animal on the earth. I have provided all kinds of fruit and grain for you to eat. And I have given the green plants as food for everything else that breathes. These will be food for animals, both wild and tame, and for birds.” God looked at what he had done. All of it was very good! Evening came and then morning—that was the sixth day.

Reflect: *Many of us know the pleasure of seeing a deer leap across a field, a hedgehog scurry under a hedge or perhaps the warmth of being welcomed home by a much-loved dog. Encounters like these are precious as they underline the connection between us humans and the wider animal world. Kathryn Greene-McCreight said: ‘There is no true humanity without other creatures of God.’ This underlines the point that there is no true humanity without both other humans and the wider community of creatures that God has created; we cannot be what we have been created to be and we are the poorer for it.*

The Bible calls on humanity to appreciate and respect the distinct nature of different kinds of creature. We share this world with the most incredible and wonderful mix of strange, colourful, funny, scary, cuddly, scaly, odd, tiny, huge creatures that we could ever possibly imagine! Without these we are diminished, incomplete even, in our humanity. The Bible is not only a story about human beings but a story about the whole world – indeed the whole universe! The story centres around people and God’s unfolding relationship with them, but the wider natural world is never far away.

Sadly, a world that God has created to be teeming with life is instead losing its life at an unparalleled rate. Thoughtlessness and selfishness make us all complicit. But there is hope of redemption for we bear the imprint of God in our own lives and that means we can act and bring change, life and a future for the entire planet.

What action will you take?

Pope Francis calls this world ‘our common home’ and biblical scholar Richard Bauckham talks of ‘the community of creation’. Spend some time with these statements, what do they say to you?