

**Readings Numbers 11: 25-29; James 5: 1-6; Mark 9: 38-43, 45, 47-48**



**Fr Michael says:**

### **Trees**

A Jewish Parable: “A Rabbi was passing a man who was planting a carob tree. ‘How long does it take for a carob tree to produce fruit?’ ‘Seventy years’ the man replied. ‘Are you so sure that you will be here in 70 years time?’ ‘No replied’ the man, but just as I found carob trees in the world, planted by my grand-parents, so am I planting this for my grandchildren.’ We look after what is past for the sake of the future – so we are all in a relationship, all those people who have gone before us, all the people with us now and those who will be here in the future! So we need to look after our world in which we live and those living in it – we respect life in all its forms, not just human forms: the plants, trees and all that is growing and living with us.

Such is our Mission today, called to be stewards, looking after things carefully, but which do not belong to us, they are God-given for us to use and hand on. Jesus tells in the Gospel that He is the Word, spoken by God to bring everything into existence and He asked has asked us to take His place in the world and act like He did, towards others, our environment, and our world. A big job indeed!

The Bible is clear - this entire world wasn’t created just for us - for human beings. In Genesis 1, plants and trees are made both for people and also for “the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground”. In the renewal of the Covenant after the flood, it is specifically to us and for creation as a whole. Bishop Francis states in his Encyclical, quoting the German Bishops: , when talking about creatures, says: “we can speak of the priority of being over that of being useful.” The Catholic Catechism adds: “Each creature possesses its own particular goodness and perfection – Each of the various creatures, willed in its own being, reflects in its own way a ray of God’s infinite wisdom and goodness. Man must therefore respect the particular goodness of every creature, to avoid any disordered use of things.”

God gave us a very special role and responsibility in tending and caring for the garden – the trees and the creatures that depend on those trees - according to Genesis 2:15. Trees are vital for the diversity of life – diversity that God cherishes and calls us to serve and preserve. What we do for trees, we are called to share with the rest of Creation. Let’s make a start by looking at our own homes and seeing how we can do that in simple ways, as a stimulus to ensuring we reach out to our wider world, working with others, to promote our “Live Simply” approach in the Parish and become involved in groups which reach out to others across our Society and to the world!