

Reflection Saturday Lent 5 – 2021

Ephraim was the second son of Joseph, the youngest son of Jacob (Israel). Ephraim means '*being fruitful*'. Jesus took refuge in Ephraim and he was certainly *fruitful*!

How often do our predictions come back to haunt us? The excuse given for killing Jesus was that, if he became too popular, the Romans would destroy Jerusalem. In fact, it was the priests and leaders who initiated the future fall of Jerusalem. As Ezekiel says, Jesus came to unite people - not just the Jewish people but all people - in a way in which each person was treated with equal respect, dignity and honour. We now enter a time of waiting. Waiting to see what will happen just as the people in Jerusalem wondered whether Jesus would come to the festival. The danger is that knowing the story so well we will fail to receive the new message this year because the story is the same. The pandemic, the continued uncertainty, the questions about the future and how we will adjust our lives, all change the setting of the story. A significant lesson is that we are being led into an experience of what is happening to creation. Its future is far from certain. At present it appears limited and open to more and more suffering. We need the promised healing and new life of Jesus not just for ourselves and the people of the world but for our creation which is calling out in one great cry of travail.

A Prayer of Gratitude for Creation - Fiona Murdoch, Eco-Congregation Ireland

God of the universe, we thank You for Your many good gifts -
for the beauty of Creation and its rich and varied fruits,
for clean water and fresh air, for food and shelter, animals and plants.

Forgive us for the times we have taken the earth's resources for granted
and wasted what You have given us.

Transform our hearts and minds
so that we would learn to care and share,
to touch the earth with gentleness and with love,
respecting all living things.

We pray for all those who suffer as a result of our waste,
greed and indifference,
and we pray that the day will come when everyone has enough
food and clean water.

Help us to respect the rights of all people and all species
and help us to willingly share your gifts
today and always. Amen.