

Reflection Friday Week 22 Pope St Gregory the Great 2021

Pope Gregory the Great (540 - 604) was born in Rome and entered public service, being the son of an aristocrat. He became Prefect of the City of Rome, an office he held for some years. He founded a monastery in Rome and others in Sicily, then became a monk himself. He was ordained deacon and sent as an envoy to Constantinople on a 5-year mission. He was elected Pope on 3rd September 590, the first monk to be elected to this office. He reformed the administration of the Church's estates, devoting the surplus to the poor and ransoming prisoners. He negotiated treaties with the Lombards who were ravaging northern Italy, and, by cultivating good relations with these and other barbarians, he was able to keep the Church secure in areas where Roman rule had broken down. He sent Augustine and his monks to England in 596, continually providing them with advice and support and (in 601) sending reinforcements. He wrote extensively on pastoral care, spirituality and morals, and designated himself "*servant of the servants of God.*" He died on 12th March 604.

As Pope St Gregory brought about great changes in the Church so our present Pope Francis has called upon us all to work for the healing of creation. He has asked us to dedicate the month of September to praying and working in a special way for creation. The call is now urgent. *"The ecological crisis is a summons to profound interior conversion... whereby the effects of our encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in our relationship with the world around us. Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience."* (Laudato Si' §217)

God of all life, we give thanks for the gift of the earth, our common home. At this time, many people, the oceans, and the eco-systems of the earth are struggling to survive. Help us to change our ways and guide us to live a life which is not centred exclusively on ourselves but on the needs of others and the worship of you as our ultimate concern.