

22<sup>nd</sup> Sunday (B)

2<sup>nd</sup> September 2018

'Day of Prayer for Care of Creation'

Deut 4: *Now Israel take notice of the laws ...*

Ps 14: *who shall dwell on Your holy mountain?*

James 1: *do what the word tells you*

Mk 7: *you put aside the commandments of God to cling to human traditions.*

I was chatting to Fr Mathew on Friday evening, and hearing about just how bad the floods were in Kerala last month. There hasn't been a flood like this in Kerala since 1924 — almost a century ago. But the recent floods affected even his own sister's home: how she had to be airlifted to safety, and still cannot return home because of the clear-up that her house will need, 2 feet deep in silt as it still is. Thankfully, at the time the local boatmen (fishermen) and army were able to rescue almost all those affected. So, whilst some 1.25 million people were displaced, yet only 450 lost their lives. But the impact of the devastation will last a long time, of course. It's a reminder of the power of nature, and our susceptibility to the vagaries of the climate. Of course the weather is always unpredictable — that will always be the case, and the case for proving climate change is far from straightforward. Nevertheless, it is certainly the case that we owe it to all of humanity, and especially the poorest, to

care for creation to the best extent possible: both for humanity today, and of course also for the generations to come.

The 1<sup>st</sup> September is the Day of Prayer for Care for Creation, a day to remember that love for God and our neighbour necessarily stretches to how we respectfully treat the Creation God has given us, and how we preserve it for mankind as a whole. Over the past year there has been a huge outcry over the pollution of the oceans with plastic refuse; and only today I was reading about the vast finances that are being poured into the development of electric vehicles: probably within 20yrs we'll all be driving electric cars. Things are moving apace, and there are some good signs of humanity's awareness of what it is in our power to do, to preserve the beauty of the earth for all 7bn of us; and for many more too. It's a matter of having the will to balance the population's needs with the earth's resources, and without some portion of the world's people being excessively greedy. The way forward isn't always clear; but for insight and co-operation we most certainly do need

prayer: prayer that the common good, the preservation of this stunningly beautiful world with all its possibilities of sustaining life, and especially the pinnacle of creations, God's human family.

When Pope Francis wrote his encyclical on the environment, *Laudato Si'*, in 2015 he concluded it with a beautiful prayer "for inspiration to take up the commitment to creation set before us by the Gospel of Jesus." Let's take up that prayer and commit ourselves to playing our part, each of us, in doing our best to look after that which God has given us ...

***A Christian prayer in union with creation***

***Father***, we praise You with all Your creatures. They came forth from Your all-powerful hand; they are Yours, filled with Your presence and Your tender love. Praise be to You!

***Son of God, Jesus***, through You all things were made. You were formed in the womb of Mary our Mother, You became part of this earth, and You gazed upon this world with human eyes. Today You are alive in every creature in Your risen glory. Praise be to You!

***Holy Spirit***, by Your light you guide this world towards the Father's love and accompany creation as it groans in travail. You also dwell in our hearts and You inspire us to do what is good. Praise be to You!

***Triune Lord***, wondrous community of infinite love, teach us to contemplate You in the beauty of the universe, for all things speak of You. Awaken our praise and thankfulness for every being that You have made. Give us the grace to feel profoundly joined to everything that is.

***God of love***, show us our place in this world as the channels of Your love for all creatures of this earth, for not one of them is forgotten in Your sight. Enlighten those who possess power and money that they may avoid the sin of indifference, that they may love the common good, advance the weak, and care for this world in which we live. The poor and the earth are crying out. O Lord, seize us with Your power and light, help us to protect all life, to prepare for a better future, for the coming of Your Kingdom of justice, peace, love and beauty. Praise be to You! Amen.