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The Dean of Derby writes...



The Festival of Creation in Christ

As I write this at the beginning of August, which one of us has not been thinking about the impact of global warming and environmental sustainability? Our garden lawns are brown, almost grey, starved of water for so long. As we drive through Derbyshire, we see fields not just brown but bare of crops as a second round of planting is not yet possible.

In July, at its summer meeting in York, the General Synod of the Church of England passed a motion establishing the Festival of Creation in Christ, to be celebrated on the first Sunday of September. This development has ecumenical roots in the worldwide Church. The Catholic Church has for long time celebrated the Season of Creation from the beginning of September until the Feast Day of St Francis of Assisi on 4th October, and many Anglican parishes have followed this lead.

At Derby Cathedral, in our ecumenical Lent Groups over the past few years we have read carefully two documents written by the late Pope Francis, namely *Laudato Sí* and *Fratelli Tutti*, both drawing the world's attention to the inter-connectedness of the whole of creation and establishing an integral ecology that has helped us to see more clearly the impact of the current crisis in declining biodiversity, adverse weather conditions and the unjust impact of climate change on disadvantaged communities.

The new Festival which at Derby Cathedral we plan to celebrate on Sunday 6th September will give us the opportunity to offer thanks to God for his creation and for the redemption of the world, and it will help us reflect on how we might best act and take responsibility for the care of a broken creation. The papers presented to General Synod in July said this: "The title 'Creation in Christ' emphasizes that creation is understood through the person and work of Jesus Christ: created through him, sustained in him and destined for renewal in him."

One way to respond is invite parishioners to read the helpful new publication, a teaching document from the Church of England's bishops, *Hope for All creation: A theological response to the environmental crisis*. It's accessible, easy to read and makes many links between what we might think and what we might do. It's a small step to read such a document but do it together in small groups – then we can only imagine what might emerge in terms of collective action!

May we use our experience and our learning from these recent weeks to shape a church response to the huge challenge that our generation faces so that we can support our children and grandchildren in the generations to come. Why not celebrate the Festival of Creation in Christ this year as a first step?

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