

'JEREMIAH. CREATION. CHURCH' – HOMILY – 25 JUNE 2017

Today's First Reading is from Jeremiah 20:10-13.

Over the last few days, Church and Indigenous leaders of the Amazon have met concerning the protection and respect of the Amazon Rainforest and adjacent spheres of life.

Whether it is the Amazon, or the Great Barrier Reef or the health of our oceans, or any of the other critical issues of the earth as our home,

**WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THE PROPHET JEREMIAH?  
AND HOW DO WE NEED TO CHANGE AS CHURCH?**

### JEREMIAH - THE PROPHET

The Prophet Jeremiah has much to teach us still.

But as Christians, followers of Jesus, we don't follow Jeremiah's call for vengeance.

He had a long ministry for about 40 years.

Called by God to speak His Word around 627-626BC,

he witnessed major highs and lows in Judah.

When we read this Old Testament Book,

we see how the major events of the day affected his own life.

He was not a spectator, but a commentator and activist.

### CREATION - THE HEALTH OF OUR WORLD & SOME QUESTIONS

We reflect today on the health of our world today.

**WHAT DO WE OFFER IN WISE COUNSEL?**

**HOW DO WE HEAL THE EARTH?**

**THROUGH OUR ACTIVITIES, HOW DO WE OVERCOME INJUSTICES?**

**WHAT FORMS OF IDOLATRY DO WE ENCOUNTER,**

**AND HOW ARE WE ABLE TO OVERCOME THESE TEMPTATIONS?**

**ARE WE IMMUNE TO THE PAIN OF THE WORLD?**

**DO FORMS OF PARALYSIS PREVENT US FROM FEELING AND CARING ABOUT OUR WORLD?**

**AND ACTING TOGETHER TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?**

**DO WE GET DESPONDENT AT TIMES?** Jeremiah did.

He found inspiration in following God, not himself.

The question became - What does God want us to do?

Not about my agenda, but God's inspiration.

With recent world events, we think of Jeremiah's words 20:10.

*"I hear many whispering: 'Terror is all around!'"*

### JEREMIAH & CREATION

He is remembered for his pronouncements against idolatry and injustice and corruption.

Yet not as well remembered for his words about creation.

He describes what he sees, for example, the effects of drought in 14:1-10.

And in other chapters we hear of the way the earth has been violated and **mourns**.

4:28 *"Because of this the earth will mourn"*

12:4 *"How long will the land mourn"*

An image of land desolate 9:10

*“Take up weeping and wailing for the mountains,  
and a lamentation for the pastures of the wilderness,  
Because they are laid waste so that no one passes through,  
and the lowing of cattle is not heard;  
both the birds of the air and the animals have fled and are gone.”*

Who speaks for the integrity of the EARTH?

Jeremiah speaks of God critiquing the prophets of his day:

23:10-11a

*“For the land is full of adulterers;  
Because of the curse the land mourns,  
And the pastures of the wilderness are dried up.  
Their course has been evil,  
And their might is not right.  
Both prophet and priest are ungodly;”*

And so, we ask ourselves –

**DO WE CARE FOR THE EARTH? – OR –  
IS OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EARTH ONE OF ADULTERY?**

**DO WE MOURN FOR WHAT SOCIETY DOES AT TIMES?  
DO WE HEAL OR DESOLATE?  
ARE OUR PROPHETS AND PRIESTS GENUINE OR UNGODLY?**

**CREATION & CHURCH**

Yet is not all doom and gloom.

**WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH COMMUNITY IN GOD’S CREATION?  
WHAT IS OUR SPIRITUALITY OF CREATION?**

Pope Francis wrote his Encyclical on Caring for Creation with us in mind.

[‘Laudato Si’ – On Care for Our Common Home](#) reminds us that we are called to care for all of creation,

including the poorest and most impoverished of people.

We are part of creation.

We are called to heal the earth and human relationships.

We are called to be healers in our personal lives, church and society.

We are called to move beyond our comfort zones.

We are called to move beyond secrecy and cover-ups and hidden deals.

In today’s Gospel: Matthew 10:26-33, Jesus says

*“So have no fear of them;  
for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered,  
and nothing secret that will not become known.  
What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light,  
and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops.”*

## CHURCH

**What changes in attitude within the Church are needed,  
so that we truly reflect where God is calling us now?  
To be people of the light – accountable to God and each other  
and to our world and to future generations.**

Bishop Vincent Long of Parramatta Diocese recently concluded his Mission 2017 address with the words below.

*“The Church is being reborn in ways beyond the traditional structures.  
Like the river that has changed its course, we have a choice to make.  
It is not in yearning for or holding on to the known and the familiar  
but in reimagining the future and  
venturing into the unknown chaos like the old exodus,  
that we shall find new life.  
The paschal rhythm summons us to a discipleship  
of humility, weakness and vulnerability, of dying and rising in Christ.  
As the Church, we must die to the old ways of being Church  
which is steeped in a culture of clerical power, dominance and privilege.  
We must abandon the old paradigm of a fortress Church  
which is prone to exclusivity and elitism.  
We must learn to rise to Christlike way  
of humility, inclusivity, compassion and powerlessness.  
In the end, though, I firmly believe  
that we’re on the threshold of renewal and transformation.  
The Second Vatican Council set in motion a new paradigm  
that cannot be thwarted by fear and paralysis.  
Once the genie is out of the bottle, it cannot be put back.  
That new paradigm is one that is based on mutuality not exclusion,  
love not fear, service not clericalism,  
engagement with the world not flight from or hostility against it,  
incarnate grace not dualism.  
May the Holy Spirit accompany us  
as we move boldly in the direction of the Kingdom.”*

Let us be involved openly in caring for our earth as our home.  
Inspired by Jeremiah’s commitment to God and people and the Earth,  
let us ask our loving God to show us the way forward.  
Called to be a prophetic church community, let us love others as God loves us.  
Let us respond to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.  
Let us pray together.

Amen.

Fr Gerry

[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/062517.cfm>]

[‘Mission 2017 - One Heart Many Voices’ <http://mohmv.com.au/2017conference/>]