

'THE WONDER AND LOVE OF CREATION' – 17TH June 2018

We acknowledge that the reference in today's Gospel,

*"large branches,
so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade"*

does have an importance not easily recognized.

It can take us back to Old Testament references to the nations of the world or empires.

It is an inclusive reference,

fitting into the pattern of the Gospel

where Jesus reaches out to all people.

All can find nest and find shade in God.

This Sunday however we will reflect on God's outreach to creation including ourselves.

INSIGHTS OF YEAR 2 AT ST JOSEPH'S

Year 2 Mass on Friday focused on bringing their creation study unit to the celebration of Eucharist at 9am.

Studying God's gift of creation of which we are a part.

They brought a keenness and energy to prayer.

They remembered the promise of God in Genesis about the sign of the Rainbow.

They placed on the cross, pictures of birds and flowers as the words of Jesus were read.

And what we need – water and food,

and in the centre - A HEART OF LOVE.

The Year 2s could understand God in motion –

creating and sustaining and providing and caring and loving.

Understanding creation from another point of view,

[Pope Francis, on Thursday, addressed participants in the summer course in Astrophysics of the Vatican Observatory.](#)

This year they examine variable stars in the light of new surveys.

Some of Pope Francis insights are:

DIVERSITY AND WORKING TOGETHER

*"Coming from many countries and cultures,
you bring with you many different areas of expertise.
You remind us that diversity can be united by a common goal of study,
and that the success of that work depends on precisely this kind of diversity.
By working together, from the variety of your backgrounds,
you can help develop a common understanding of our universe."*

THREE WAYS OF SEEING

*"To know the universe, at least in part; to know what we know and what we don't know,
and how we can go about learning more; this is the task of the scientist.
There is another way of seeing things, that of metaphysics,*

which acknowledges the First Cause of everything, hidden from tools of measurement. Then there is still another way of seeing things, through the eyes of faith, which accepts God's self-disclosure. Harmonizing these different levels of knowledge leads us to understanding, and understanding – we hope – will make us open to wisdom."

STUDY MOVED BY LOVE

"We are persons, with a sense of curiosity that drives us to know more; we are creatures, who work to learn and share what we have learned for the pure joy of doing so. And as people who love what we do, we can find in our love for this universe a foretaste of that divine Love which, in contemplating his creation, declared that it was good. Dante famously wrote that it is love that moves the sun and the stars (cf. Paradiso, XXXIII, 145). May your work likewise be "moved" by love: love of truth; love of the universe itself; and love for one another as you work together amid your diversity."

Let us first read today's First Reading and Gospel in colour.

Let us put the verbs in **RED**.

1ST READING - EZEKIEL 17:22-24

In the 1st Reading we notes **the verb** –
Indicating God moving, God creating, God promising, God accomplishing.
We note God offering hope. And creation acknowledging God.

Isaiah records God saying:

*"Thus says the Lord God:
I myself **will take** a sprig from the lofty top of a cedar; I **will set** it out.
I **will break** off a tender one from the topmost of its young twigs;
I myself **will plant** it on a high and lofty mountain.
On the mountain height of Israel I **will plant** it,
in order that it **may produce** boughs and **bear** fruit,
and **become** a noble cedar.
Under it every kind of bird **will live**;
in the shade of its branches **will nest** winged creatures of every kind.
All the trees of the field **shall know** that I **am** the LORD.
I **bring low** the high tree, I **make high** the low tree;
I **dry up** the green tree and **make** the dry tree **flourish**.
I the LORD **have spoken**; I **will accomplish** it."*

GOSPEL OF MARK 4:26-34

With those insights into creation,
we now move on to an understanding of the kingdom of God
that is wider than just the physical.

Jesus says:

“He also said,

*‘The kingdom of God is as if
someone **would scatter** seed on the ground,
and **would sleep** and rise night and day,
and the seed **would sprout and grow**,
he **does not know** how.
The earth **produces** of itself, first the stalk,
then the head, then the full grain in the head.
But when the grain **is** ripe, at once he **goes** in with his sickle,
because the harvest **has come**.’*

He also said,

*‘With what can we compare the kingdom of God,
or what parable will we use for it?’*

*It **is** like a mustard seed, which, when **sown** upon the ground,
is the smallest of all the seeds on earth;
yet when it **is sown** it **grows** up and **becomes** the greatest of all shrubs,
and **puts forth** large branches,
so that the birds of the air **can make** nests in its shade.’*

*With many such parables he spoke the word to them,
as they were able to hear it;
he did not speak to them except in parables,
but he explained everything in private to his disciples.”*

You are invited to read both readings again,
seeing in the three ways Pope Francis mentioned above.

And we note in the Gospel:

- The times when creation is at work
yet to us nothing seems to be happening. A quiet time not dramatic.
While we sleep each day and rise for each new day.
- The farmer understands the different stages of growth,
but not how it happens.
The farmer trusts in what God has begun and nourishes.
- The growth brings hope for a harvest. We can see the growth.
- If we are humble enough we can see that the planting of the seed
brings hope from the very beginning.

WHAT HAS GOD PLANTED IN US?

ARE WE NOURISHING IT IN ITS GROWTH?

WHAT WILL GOD HARVEST FROM US IN OUR LIVES?

- In the harvest time we are busy. The harvest is in God's time.

As the Year 2s showed on Friday, the **LOVE OF GOD** is at the centre of the cross.

As Pope Francis said above:

*'be "moved" by love: love of truth; love of the universe itself;
and love for one another as you work together amid your diversity.'*

HOW DO WE REFLECT GOD'S LOVE IN OUR DIVERSITY AND LOVE FOR TRUTH AND CREATION?

HOW DO OUR LIVES BECOME A MUSTARD SHRUB, SHELTERING OTHERS IN OUR BRANCHES?

**Creation is a network of interconnected relationships,
with earth as our common home,**
with the stages of growth from seed to harvest to feed us;
with the mustard seed growing into a shrub for shade for the birds.

The diversity of creation yet one universe.
The diversity of sciences yet working together.
The diversity of our giftedness as a family yet called to witness to God our Creator.
The diversity of scientists and Year 2 Students sharing wonder.
The insights of Year 2s linking creation and the cross, through the love of Jesus.
Let us be moved by love.

LOVE CAN BE SEEN ON ALL THREE LEVELS –

1. physical, 2. metaphysical, and 3. through the eyes of faith.
 1. The love of God at the core of creation.
 2. The love of God - creative, nourishing, sustaining, loving.
 3. The love of God - being sown in us, growing in us, being harvested in us.

Let us pray.

Fr Gerry

[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/061718.cfm>]

[Parish Facebook: <http://bit.ly/parishFacebook17062018>]

Other References:

[Pope Francis: Address to participants at the Astrophysics Summer School, 14 June 2018](#)

GOSPEL OF MARK

HOMILY: THE WONDER AND LOVE OF CREATION

"With what can we compare the kingdom of God,
or what parable will we use for it?..."



"The Love of God being sown in us, growing in us, being harvested in us." Fr. Gerry

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