

## Care of Creation – October 2020

This is a time to give thanks. We are back to Alert Level 1 and I shall be allowed to return to ministry in care homes. Churches will be allowed to worship normally – but with caution and prayer for others. We still live in a world where great powers are armed against each other and communist-style rulers allow little freedom to their subjects while democracies suffer from differences of opinion. Religions divide us, although there are various interfaith groups promoting understanding and cooperation. When one reads of the power of God shown in ancient times and what prophets were given to do and say, it is clear that the risen Christ is now showing a very gentle approach. Like Jonah, most people want to see evil punished. We are not patient or loving enough to reach out to Zacchaeus watching from his tree. God's way is very gentle.

So it is with the care of creation in our diocese. At first it came well down the list. Some thought it was not important – who were we to support scientists in saying that using coal and petroleum and various chemicals was detrimental and therefore sinful? How can the parish afford electric cars? Now things are changing. The present pope took the name of Francis and has just produced a new encyclical called “Fratelli Tutti,” or “Brothers All”.

Our Archbishop Moxon took on the post of representing our Church in Rome. Maybe our message was put too crudely. When the late John Allen did the maths, he showed that changing from petrol-driven cars and aircraft en masse would involve a lot of waste. It takes energy to crush cars and altering whole fleets of expensive airliners must be done slowly. Change needs to happen more gently. I sometimes wonder whether John Mark came home from Cyprus in shock at seeing how St Paul dealt with an opponent. Paul was not the sort of person to forget the story of Elijah calling down fire from heaven on two squads of soldiers!

Cathy Bi-Riley and her sustainability champions are finding all sorts of ways in which parishes can promote the care of creation, and the stories about St Francis of Assisi and his care for the poor and for animals give the Church a season to consider this. Our Auckland branch of A Rocha has planting and weeding days in parts of Auckland, and NZ Christians In Science have been running a winter series on finding meaning in times of pandemic. These lectures can be found on their website, [www.nzcis.org](http://www.nzcis.org).

A recent paper argued that the Sahara Desert, with its sunlight and strong winds, could export power by means of a tunnel of hydrogen to cold Europe, but the countries in Africa remember how their northern neighbours treated their colonies. They have their own divisions and problems. Would the people working on solar panels be well paid and have good holidays? And what would be done about countries no longer exporting so much oil? Scientists show us a lot of things – even how there can be beings outside of time and invisible to our eyes. But politicians and their supporters have to agree to changes for anything to be done.

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