

Prov V Creation Care notes

December 2021

Jerry—Opened us with prayer, picked specifically because it is related to the topic at hand.

Carl, Deacon Joey, Christopher, Gregg, Elliott, Jean, Susan, Mike, Rhoden, Lisa, Jill

How do we find Creation alive in this season?

Joey—season of hope, contemplation, quiet, going into the woods. What's come into his life the last few weeks is a sense of expectation and hope in the universe that surrounds him all the time. Leading into Christmas, Christ with us, and when we celebrate the incarnation again, he knows that Christ with him will bring him to actionable steps. He sees the hope when he travels his diocese as a deacon. Last weekend he had a dinner meeting and one of the members prepared a liturgy around Creation Care. All he did was facilitate a discussion around it. IT was great hope. Help with concrete steps that churches can use. He did their advent worship out of EOW and people resonated with that. They are doing an instructive eucharist.

Jerry—is there anything about this season that's more hopeful than others?

Joey—it's the beginning of the church year, new beginning, new season, gives him a vitality that he didn't have before.

Lisa—almost irritated with herself for having hope. Gets tired sometimes with the grimness of the times and the call for hope. They are relaunching an ecological ministry at church this Sunday. Their liturgy is loaded with creation reference. Last week she was with another lay person at another church to speak very informatly to a new student interste grop on creation care at the seminary. They wre so engaged and interested. Such yearning and eagerness. Wanted to hear things they could actually do as potential priests.

Jerry—is it connected to this season?

Lisa—somewhat happenstance of the calendar but it is a brilliant coincidence. Has given her time to reflect.

Catherine—we don't do much. Animals in our imagery and poinsettias, but it's by chance. And we're so busy. We're not doing much.

Jerry—Christmas is anthropocentric because we're talking about a human baby. Want tot alk about three things to have us grasp creation in the season.

Scandal of Particularty, Deep incarnation, Cosmic Christ. How do these things fit together?

Scandal of Particularity—where we meet the challenges of a jewish baby born 2000 years ago in a particular part of the world. That the God of all time and being came in full expression in a single point of time and place in a single culture, and human body. How is that possible or helpful?

Joey—The answer becomes vivid in the celebration of Christmas when we read the prologues of the Gospel of John. Incarnation—believes that there are two incarnations—the birth of Christ. The first incarnation was the big bang. Everything was created out of the trinity. Preaching opportunity to preach that.

Jerry—What has come into being was light and the light has come into all people. I wish John had written that the light was the light of all creation. Then the gospel moves from cosmic generality into a moment of time and place.

The scandal has been that because Jesus was because a particular culture race, etc we say “this is what God is.” And when the Jewish Middle eastern baby becomes a white male baby, the face of God becomes that too—and that has been plaguing us for centuries. We have to keep returning to it over and over again to try to undo the racism and misogyny that come from tying God to a time and place. Because this incarnation happened at a time and place where our view of humans wasn’t inclusive (re: homosexuality) we battle “if he said that at that time, does it have to be that way forever?” same with Wine—wine was a product of that time, so now we have to have wine forever? And also we have the challenge of the fact that it was a human baby? Does that mean God likes humans best? We only care about humans? Does god not care about trees?

Jane: Appreciate the asking of the questions. Nice to sit here and think.

Jerry: Yes. It’s critical. Life and death to sit here and think. Both for the earth and for the church because this scandal is driving people away from the church.

Jane: it’s a great time to raise money for the church. That’s where her parish is. This is more “going to church” for her.

Elliot: Another part of the scandal is that Jesus, as human, grew in understanding of God’s love (see Syra-phoenician woman)

Jerry: Yes and this raises the same cultural question. Can you express God in a single culture?

Moving on—a couple of responses are Deep incarnation and Cosmic Christ.

Deep incarnation—God came to save all living things, the entire cosmos. Shallow incarnation might say that the ANE Jewish child came as an infant to show us the human face of God. Which is where most of our pew sitting people believe to show God our human face. It’s an ancient idea. It’s just been forgotten in the west. We have been so death-focused on the cross that we forget about the incarnation as the saving event. In Orthodoxy, the incarnation is as much the saving event as death/resurrection is. There was an act of salvation in the birth. Adam was made from dirt, Jesus is likened to Adam. Body of God is dirt. This has all sorts of workable, meditable ideas. Life on earth did NOT start with Adam. Humans are late to the game. The word didn’t begin with the human conversation. God did not become trinity with Christ, Creation didn’t begin with humans, the HS was closely involved in creation and continues to breathe it’s life therein. It’s been going on since the beginning and continues. Deep incarnation involves Jesus being involved with all life, not just the 33 years of Jesus’ life. Jesus is still incarnate. Nearness of God in the humus itself. Present in all existing life. Theme in bible is that heaven comes down to earth and heals even brutality and suffering in the animal realm through grace. This is the vision. God has

never given up on the garden. It was not a mistake that was abandoned. Incarnation as a universe-wide event that has meaning for the whole. It specifically answers the scandal of particularity.

Deacon Joey—this is something that we know, it's built into our DNA, anyone who has taken a walk into a forest feels it, but we need to talk about it.

Jerry: and this changes what we mean about sacraments and salvation. Salvation in the church only? And baptism only about being safe after you die? Salvation isn't just about being safe, it's about salvation of earth. You can't exploit a sacred creation. When we center work of God onto the human animal, we have a privileged role and exploit everything else in the name of God. If we say everything is sacred, it undoes our entire economy.

Mike: Finds this fascinating. He is part of a Cincinnati interfaith movement. Local Lutherans have a Creation Care movement and so do the Catholics. Maybe in response to this scandal there is an ecumenical movement back to sacramentalism of all. The word "only" has always puzzled him.

Joey: Laudato Si Action Platform. Is participating to try to build a seven year plan for their diocese based on that. Which lines up to what scientists are telling us about what we need to do by 2030 to keep temp rise to 1.3 degrees. In the church we are looking for theology and action.

Jerry—I want to put in the middle, between theology and action, CELEBRATION.

Cosmic Christ—natural outflow of Deep Incarnation. If Christ was incarnate as more than just a person, and more than a place in time, then the return must be similar. Cosmic Christ struggles with what the return looks like. Eph 1 where, fullness of time, to gather up all things. Not a human. Col 1—image of invisible God, borne of all creation, not just human. All things created. Reconcile all things to himself.

Catherine—Reminder of BPG, Jerry, Collin presenting and panel discussion. We will meet next month, January 3. We will post notes and chat to web site.

Deacon Joey: Closing prayer

A Prayer for our Earth

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.

You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.

Fill us with peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

O God of the poor,

help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes.

Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.

Touch the hearts

of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,

to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognize that we are profoundly united
with every creature
as we journey towards your infinite light.
We thank you for being with us each day.
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle
for justice, love and peace.

—Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* #246