

Monday 8th February 2021

Monday week 5 in Ordinary Time

Genesis 1:1-19, Mark 6:53-26.

Today's first reading is from the opening chapters of the Bible, and introduces the first creation account. The Biblical creation accounts are not intended to be scientifically correct explanations of creation. (In fact there are two accounts in Genesis; this one and one in chapter two). This, the more famous one, has a wonderful rhythm to it as was probably written by the Temple priests to emphasise the rhythm of the week, ending on the Sabbath, the day of rest.

However, for today we are only introduced to the first four "days" of creation. At the end of each "day" we read "and God saw that it was good". The overall meaning of both creation accounts is that creation is good. Everything comes from God and God created it to be good. When we come to the sixth day with the creation of man, His work is described as "very good" (v.31). Man, created in God's image and likeness, is the pinnacle of His creation.

If what God has created is good, then why is there sin and evil in the world? God did not create evil – evil is an absence of the good, a turning away from God. Our first parents turned away from God and believed a lie (Gen. 3:6) and as a result sin spread through the whole of creation. Sin does not only affect humanity, but it affects creation itself as sinful humanity abuses the beautiful world that we have been given. As a society, we always want more... and if we can afford it we try to obtain it (often without regard of how it has been produced). I was reminded of this the other day, when watching the birds feeding in the garden. We put out ample food and replenish it regularly but still they fight over it and chase others away. No matter how much food there is, some birds are territorial and will not share. I mused that this must be how God looks at us. "I have given you more than enough, so why are you fighting over what I have given you for free?"

And over the whole history of the human race, societies have been prepared to fight for what they want, damaging creation in the process.

In the Gospel we see Jesus teaching and healing. Healing is re-creating. The Son of God came so that we might be re-created; that the whole world might be redeemed from its slavery to sin and selfishness. Jesus' work of healing shows that sickness is not a part of God's original plan for humanity, but a consequence of the original sin of our first parents. We only have to look at the probable cause of the current pandemic to see how humanity's selfishness and carelessness with creation has had devastating effects.

- Lord have mercy on us,
- Christ have mercy on us,
- Lord have mercy on us.