

## **Tuesday Reflection 5th October 2021**

I am writing this in Germany on the Feast of St Francis, three days after the CAFOD Family Fast Day, which celebrated those who care for Creation. In her appeal for the Fast Day, Christine Allen, the Head of CAFOD, reminded us that those who suffer most from the Climate Crisis are those who have done least to cause it. By extension, those who did most to cause it, will be the last to suffer from it - and that probably includes most of us in the so-called developed world.

What St Francis's contemplative life taught him, and what he teaches us, is that we are all part of God's Creation, and are therefore charged to care for it and live within our means by not taking more out than we are prepared to put in.

Two days ago we were in Rudesheim, a small town on the Rhine opposite Bingen, which is where St Hildegard came from. Rudesheim still houses an abbey founded by St Hildegard. She was a most astounding woman, a poet, composer and scientist, who lived around the same time as St Francis. It is one of the most uplifting experiences I have had to sit in St Hildegard's Abbey Church and listen to the invisible choir of nuns singing the music that their foundress wrote some 700 years ago.

St Hildegard was one of the founders of modern pharmacology, who studied the healing power of plants; it is worth remembering that many of our modern drugs and medicines are plant-based. Who can know whether by colluding in the extinction of plant species in the Amazon Basin and elsewhere we are not destroying the basis of medicines on which we might have to rely in the future?

**Michael Townson**