

Reflection Wednesday 23rd September

Genesis 1:14-25

And God said, 'Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.' And it was so. God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

And God said, 'Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.' So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.' And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

And God said, 'Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.' And it was so. God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

This week is Climate Week, something I did not know when I started this reflection but with that information it is all the more relevant.

In recent years, and very much in recent days, there has been a great focus upon the rapidly declining diversity of animal life. Whilst there are still many species of beetles and insects not discovered on this planet – I nearly wrote our planet which suggest we own it – there are a growing number of species whose numbers are declining very rapidly.

David Attenborough has been at the forefront of wildlife documentaries during my lifetime and over the years his style and focus has changed. Often that change in emphasis and ethos has been due to his awareness of what humankind has done and is doing to this planet.

The stars are not as visible in the sky as they used to be due to light pollution; many children will not have seen a sky full of stars to wonder at.

In my own life I have been able to visit a range of places around the world – often supporting Charities at the time – and been amazed at some of the sights. Back in 2005 Anita and I were camping at about 12,500ft above sea level in the Andes. As we looked out of the tent one evening Anita commented on a cloud that was stationary in the sky; then we realised it was not a cloud but the Milky Way which we could see out amongst the stars. "And God saw that it was good".

On another occasion we were swimming in a lagoon in Mexico amongst Parrot-fish, having been snorkelling off the coast amongst a vast array of different fish earlier in the week. I have watched a vast flock of Flamingos on a lake in Kenya – though much smaller than it used to be; closer to home we have watched the murmuration of starlings along the North West Coast of England. "And God saw that it was good".

Walking through the Rift Valley in Kenya and seeing Zebra as though they were cattle, looking into the eye of a Giraffe whilst feeding them, watching the orphaned elephants in a sanctuary near Nairobi or the fox run across Norton Road in Iwerley. "And God saw that it was good".

When God looked at the Creation as it was being developed, at each stage, "And God saw that it was good".

When humankind was created God asked that we take care of the creation and be stewards of it.

As we go forward into the next few decades we will need to look more carefully at how we act as Stewards of the earth and not think we are owners who can treat it in anyway we choose. Be it global warming, plastic pollution, food waste or other issues we need to "Think it out again" (Metanoia).

"And God saw that it was good" – may we not allow it to get any worse and indeed help it to get better than it has become.