

## World Oceans Day

Today, 8<sup>th</sup> June, is World Oceans Day. This day is, to quote, “an annual observation to honour, help protect, and conserve the world's oceans. The ocean provides us with many resources and services including oxygen, climate regulation, food sources, medicine, and more. World Oceans Day also provides an opportunity to take personal and community action to conserve the ocean and its resources.”

On the news the other day just one example from the Greek islands in the Gulf of Corinth was shown. This is an area popular with tourists looking for sun, sand and beautifully clear sea in which to swim. The news item showed a local group of divers trying to clear the sea floor of plastic and other waste. They managed to fill bags of non bio-degradable waste which is not simply unpleasant for swimmers but also dangerous, not least for the fish and other sea creatures that inhabit the sea.

That was just the tip of the iceberg. High profile figures like Sir David Attenborough have already highlighted the problems of plastic and other waste that is polluting our oceans, and warning of the dire consequences if that continues unchecked. Ultimately we are all likely to be affected by this.

In theory I imagine most people would agree that pollution of the environment is a bad thing. Yet there are many vested interests that enable that to continue. Human greed and selfishness play a major part in this. Never mind those who are adversely affected.

Should Christians be particularly concerned? Surely the answer is a resounding yes. For we believe that creation is ultimately the work of God. We are stewards of what God has created. And what God has created is intrinsically good – as we heard in those verses just now from the first chapter of the book of Genesis (Genesis 1.1, 9-10, 21-22). For most Christians the account of creation given there in no way conflicts with modern scientific understanding. It is not to be taken as a literal step by step description but rather as a profound theological meditation on God's creative activity, and by extension, on humanity's responsibility. That is echoed in the opening verse of Psalm 24: “The earth is the Lord's and all that fills it, the compass of the world and all who dwell therein.”

As Christians we care for the well-being of the earth because we believe that God cares for it. We share a concern for the environment with those of no faith. And the oceans are particularly precious because we still do not know enough about them and all the varied life that they support. It is said that we know more about the moon than about the earth's oceans. And so we give thanks for all who work to protect our oceans and its resources and to try to change selfish attitudes and behaviour. All that work contributes to peace in our world.

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