

## World Environment Day

Mission is a fundamental calling and task of the Church. The Church of England affirms this in its Five Marks of Mission. The first three are what one would expect in order to proclaim and share the love of God in word and in service:

The mission of the Church is the mission of Christ:

To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom

To teach, baptize and nurture new believers

To respond to human need by loving service.

The remaining two, though, are wider in their application and very much tie in with the aims of the Community of the Cross of Nails and our ministry here at St Martin's – namely:

To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation; and:

To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

This last Wednesday, 5<sup>th</sup> June, was World Environment Day, and the theme for this year is air pollution. The protection of the environment is a concern for everyone, and especially a duty on those who have the power and influence to effect change for the better. It is, though, as that fifth mark of mission so clearly articulates, a specific concern for Christians. For we believe that creation is God's creation, and that we are entrusted as stewards of it.

At a training session on mission for deacons I attended on Monday evening we were asked if we have ever preached on plastic and its effect on the environment. None of us had, but the person who raised this admitted that he had not either. It is, however, an important and pressing issue in our world today, as are so many other environment issues, not least this year's World Environment Day's theme of air pollution.

Of course in the face of the many threats to our environment we may well feel helpless. That is especially so when some in positions of power and influence deny there is a problem and even thwart attempts to apply solutions. Yet there is a groundswell of opinion that these issues need to be faced and tackled, and quickly – not least among young people. And there are small steps we can all learn to take in our daily lives. Cumulatively they can only help, though the real solutions do lie with governments and corporations.

A healthy and sustainable environment is surely a basic human right, as well as what we believe to be God's will for his created world. We pray that with God's help that may indeed be achieved.

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