

## **Donnybrook**

26 October 2021

### **Welcome**

Romans chapter 8 is one of the great passages from the pen of St Paul. There is an extraordinary energy not only in the message but even in the writing, which is poetic, uplifting and elusive.

### **Topic**

Can it speak to us today?

### **Steps**

In our day, we have become sharply aware of how everything is connected. Sometimes this can be frightening. For example, there is a new book out called *Silent Earth. Averting the Insect Apocalypse*. The message is that insects are essential for life – all life – on earth and that without them our world will grind to a halt. What the scientists are discovering is alarming but also wonderful – the vast interdependence of all forms of life on space-ship earth.

That sense of connectedness is found in Romans 8, in Paul's cosmic vision:

From the beginning till now the entire creation, as we know, has been groaning in one great act of giving birth; and not only creation, but all of us who possess the first-fruits of the Spirit, we too groan inwardly as we wait for our bodies to be set free.

The message has been picked up by spiritual leaders of our own day. In particular, Pope Francis has been a leader. It is a great pity that he finds himself unable to attend the climate conference in Glasgow, COP 26 which starts shortly. Faith does not contribute to the science of climate change and environmental threat. Its contribution lies elsewhere: placing the issues in the wider spiritual context, motivating us to honour the Creator in the created and making us aware that we are, as human beings, in this together.

### **Conclusion**

It would help if we could match our anxiety with the hopeful vision of St Paul. We need the positive energy he offers – otherwise it would be easy to lose heart.