

## **Pro-Cathedral**

29 September 2021

### **Welcome**

The images of God that we carry in our hearts are important to us. They are shaped by experience and by whatever is going on in our lives at the moment. An ancient example would be our first reading. At the time of writing, Jews in the Holy Land were under the Syrians and were, in fact, being persecuted and put to death for their faith. Accordingly, the image of God in the first reading is that of an old man, the Ancient of Days, who is a king and has a court around him. This figure dispenses justice, as the books were opened. The final teaching of the book is that God will be faithful to those who have been faithful to him to the point of death. You can see how powerful such an image would be for people under threat of death.

### **Steps**

In our time, we are gradually discovering again God as our creator, the one who holds us in being. There are three motors driving this rediscovery. *Firstly*, on account of the pandemic, many people have connected again with nature – in their own gardens, in the local parks, simply by taking more exercise. It is one of the positives out of the Covid-19 period.

*Secondly*, the ecological crisis is obliging us to think again about how we live. People of faith need to ask does faith shed any light on this global crisis? I think the answer is yes. Not only is all of creation a wonderful gift; it is, at the same time, a kind of sacrament, God present in all that is. As St Paul says in Athens, in him we live and move and have our being. When we treat nature with respect and love, we don't just honour the creator. Instead, we meet the creator in the created. As one poet put it in the Old Testament: we could say more but could never say enough. Let the final word be, he is the All.

*Thirdly*, our leaders in church have been speaking now for years about respect for creation and justice for future generations. The latest voice is our own Archbishop, Dermot Farrell. His new pastoral letter, *The Cry of the Earth, the Cry of the Poor*, is an extended reflection on climate crisis and on how we, as believers, can play our part. I would recommend it strongly. There are different ways you could read the pastoral: on your own would be the usual way and can be very good. To read as a part of a group would be very enriching – hearing the reactions and opinions of others can be a great help.

### **Conclusion**

Spiritually, we are rediscovering in our time the faith we proclaim every Sunday: I believe in God, the father almighty, the creator of all that is, seen and unseen. To him be glory, for ever and ever. Amen