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Picture on front cover: Magnolia Star Wars taken at Caerhays Castle in 2006, by Philip Webb

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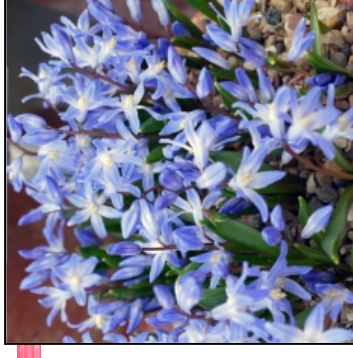
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Prayer guide for the care of creation

April 2012



“The Lord is faithful to all his promises and loving towards all he has made . . .
The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time.
You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every loving thing.”
(Psalm 145.13-16)

“All of creation God gives humankind to use. If this privilege is misused,
God’s justice permits creation to punish humanity.” (Hildegarde of Bingen)

“My great, great grandchildren won’t let me sleep. They keep asking me in my
dreams, what did you do when the earth was plundered? Surely you did
something when the seasons started failing as the mammals, reptiles and
birds were all dying? Did you fill the streets with protest when democracy was
stolen? What did you do, once you knew?”
(Drew Dellinger)

Jubilee: A year of emancipation and restoration (Oxford Dictionary)



Sunday 1st April.

Lord, you have given us this beautiful world, with the ability to harvest its products for our nourishment. Yet in our greed we have been robbing future generations, poisoning your world and destroying many of your creatures. Help us to realise that we interfere with your world at our peril. It is your hand, not ours, that rules this world and we are here as your stewards.

Monday 2nd April

Professor Tim Gorrige at the recent CEL conference referred to the contradiction of infinite growth on a finite planet and endorsed the Transition movement (www.transitionculture.org.uk) as a striking alternative. "People of faith cannot be relegated to a 'spiritual realm', for the whole of reality is the gift of God and so an imperative to promote sustainable living. Future generations currently have no say in how this country is governed."

Tuesday 3rd April

Green House is a new think tank launched at the House of Commons with a report proposing a public jury called "Guardians of the Future" with power to veto legislation which threatens the basic needs of future citizens and to force a review (following a public petition) of any such legislation. Hungary has already appointed an Ombudsman for Future Generations. Rupert Read of the University of East Anglia said: "People once saw the abolition of slavery as ludicrous, but in effect we are enslaving people by condemning them to a future far worse than now." www.greenhousethinktank.org

Wednesday 4th April

An International Energy Agency report "Are we entering a Golden Age of Gas?" foresees a 50% rise in global use of gas from 2010 to 2035 when gas will supply over a quarter of global energy demand. But it goes on: "While natural gas is the cleanest fossil fuel, its increased use could muscle out low-carbon fuels based on renewables and nuclear . . . A high gas scenario implies a rise in carbon emissions consistent with a temperature rise of over 3.5 degrees C., while a path towards a 2 degree rise would require a greater shift to low-carbon energy sources, increased energy efficiency and deployment of Carbon Capture & Storage which could reduce emissions from gas-fired plants." Recently the Government has announced measures designed to attract investors in gas.

Thursday 5th April

Denmark has announced a target of meeting all its energy demand from renewables by 2050. The IEA points out the magnitude of this challenge: "Integrating large volumes of variable electricity supply will require a big reconfiguration of the electricity network. Denmark is well connected with its neighbours, but more investment in interconnections will be needed." As President of the EU Council, Denmark, through the Energy Efficiency Directive, will have a major influence on meeting the EU target of reducing energy consumption by 20% by 2020.

Friday 6th April. Good Friday.

Lord Jesus, who showed your love for us by treading the path of the Cross for our sakes, make us more ready to take up our personal crosses and to follow you in faith, knowing that you will be with us to the end.

expensive oil – a new breed of sheep called "Easycare" has been engineered that does not need annual shearing.

Yet wool has many beneficial properties and is a renewable resource. It offers efficient insulation for houses, it is non-flammable, it has unique heat-retaining properties and it produces none of the toxic fumes and dust particles that contribute to the growing problem of breathing allergies. In short, it is one of Nature's gifts, which we ignore at our peril.

Saturday 28th April

After World War I domestic consumption in America was languishing, so Edward Bernays, the founder of modern advertising, took it upon himself to spread the gospel of consumerism and unlimited economic growth. In 1928 he wrote: "The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organised habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society."

Mass consumerism is so prevalent today because we have been persuaded that living with the grain of nature is a kind of cultural immobility and that 'progress' must be pursued even if it threatens to destabilise the very foundations of life.

Sunday 29th April

O God of earth and altar, bow down and hear our cry,
Our earthly rulers falter, our people drift and die;
The walls of gold entomb us, the swords of scorn divide,
Take not thy thunder from us, but take away our pride.

From all that terror teaches, from lies of tongue and pen,

From all the easy speeches that comfort cruel men,

From sale and profanation of honour and the sword,

From sleep and from damnation
Deliver us, good Lord!

(G.K. Chesterton)

Monday 30th April

Chris Goodall in his book "The Future of the Word: Technology, Culture and the Slow Erosion of Literacy" finds that recent decades have seen continuous falls in the time individuals spend with books and other printed material. The ability to comprehend complex writing, long words and sophisticated expressions is also less than it was. "Why" he asks "is our ability to understand and use the written word in gradual but apparently relentless decline?" Some say we no longer need to read because all the information we need is instantaneously available through electronic gadgets. Goodall believes this complacency is mistaken. "Reading deeply helps us develop a framework and an intellectual structure to which we can add new ideas and opinions. The internet gives us orphaned facts, but the reading of books and long articles gives us understanding. As importantly, deep reading trains our brains to cope with complex ideas, much as an athlete trains his muscles with repeated exercise."

Sources:

"Harmony" by the Prince of Wales
Positive News
GreenHealthWatch magazine
Green Futures
www.edie.net

Sunday 22nd April

Dear Father, prayer is a mystery. We do not understand how it works or how our feeble petitions reach you. But we know that Jesus prayed and opened the way into your presence. Help us to follow his example and teaching, and to learn to pray more naturally, more readily and more often, and always in the Name of Jesus.

(Llewellyn Cummings)

Monday 23rd April

"There are two sciences: the science of understanding and the science of manipulation." (Fritz Schumacher)

60 billion farm animals throughout the world are reared to provide us with food, the majority of them by using industrial techniques in factory farms. Livestock production requires one-third of the world's farmland and grain harvest.

Livestock is responsible for around 18% of greenhouse gas emissions.

Tuesday 24th April

The most abundant bird on the planet is the domestic chicken – 50 billion of them – reared to feed human appetites. A chicken will naturally live for eight years, but, reared in windowless sheds on an industrial scale, they are ready for slaughter in just 6 weeks. They have no room to exercise, forage for food, dust-bathe or any of their other natural behaviour habits. This is the science of manipulation on a vast scale.

Wednesday 25th April

One-third of everything we eat depends on bees for pollination. Yet more than 3 million bee colonies in the US and elsewhere have died in recent years. Scientists are still debating the

cause of this catastrophic collapse, though there is much evidence that modern pesticides are implicated. To most of us it seems obvious that if we lace our fields with pesticides designed to kill insects, bees will be among the victims. As Prince Charles puts it in "Harmony": "It is quite bizarre how we continue to put our faith in the very substances that are destroying the cycle which produces our food. It really is a form of hubris and I wonder if those who practise such irresponsible scepticism in these matters will ever see that the emperor is wearing no clothes."

Thursday 26th April

The so-called Green Revolution was accompanied in India by a thirty-fold increase in the use of artificial fertilisers since the 1960s, leading to higher yields in the early stages of the roll-out. However, the levels of essential micronutrients have since fallen and continue to fall, with the result that yields are no bigger than they were before. Ecologist Evelyn Hutchinson once asked "Why are there so many species in Nature?" Her answer was that plant relationships enable different organisms to store energy and resources for one another. By growing just one, genetically uniform plant in an isolated, linear way, we reduce the biodiversity of the entire ecosystem and therefore weaken every plant's resistance to the stresses of drought, pests and diseases. Just as a child who is not exposed to germs will not develop a resistance to infection, so plants grown in this way become less and less able to fight off disease.

Friday 27th April

Most sheep farmers find so little value in wool that they are forced to destroy what their sheep produce. Because of competition from man-made fibres – all based on increasingly

Saturday 7th April

An article in "Nature" by Sir David King, former Government chief scientist, suggests that peak oil production may already have occurred. Since 2005 it has stagnated at about 75 million barrels a day, while the world will need an extra 64 million barrels a day by 2030. "The future economy is unlikely to be able to bear what oil prices have in store. Only by moving away from fossil fuels can we both ensure a more robust economic outlook and address the challenges of climate change."

Sunday 8th April. Easter Day.

God our Father, our hearts are full of adoration and gratitude and wondering love. We cannot express our happiness in words on this, the greatest day of all the year.

As we bow our heads, make us quiet enough to listen, humble enough to understand, pure-hearted enough to see Jesus, until we know that he is here with us our Master, Friend and King for ever. We ask it for his sake. Amen. (Leslie Weatherhead)

Monday 9th April

In 1900 the world population was about 1.6 billion, which allowed an average of 7.91 hectares to feed each individual.

In 2002 there were over 6 billion of us and the land available to feed each person had shrunk to 2.02 hectares.

By 2050 the world population is expected to reach 9 billion, when 1.63 hectares will have to be enough for each individual.

No single solution is available. We must both preserve and enhance the fertility of the land we have, reduce our demand for resources and, crucially, offer couples all the means available to limit any further rise in population.

Without tackling all these policies simultaneously, we are on course for ever-increasing competition for ever-diminishing areas of cultivable land.

Tuesday 10th April

Over the past decade, more than 100,000 Punjabi farmers have committed suicide due to the exorbitant rates of borrowing demanded for the purchase of modern GM seeds, fertilisers and pesticides, often leading to poor harvests. It seems we have devised a method of farming which not only kills weeds and insects, but indirectly kills the farmers themselves. The Prince of Wales in his book "Harmony" asks: "Is this disconnected, mechanical approach to food production really a long-term, sustainable path for the world to take?"

Wednesday 11th April

In 2008 a panel of 400 experts from across the world published an International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology (IASTD) which concluded that to continue with the industrialisation of agriculture, using ever more sophisticated chemicals, GM crops and monocultures, would exhaust our resources and put our children's future in jeopardy. It called for new economic and legal frameworks to combine productivity with the protection of soils, water, forests and natural biodiversity. The way to help the poorest farmers was not through providing expensive seeds, pesticides and fertilisers, but through adopting traditional methods suited to their land, so as to make them less vulnerable to crop failure, sudden drops in the value of commodities and other factors outside the farmers' control.

Thursday 12th April

Water is as essential for the growth of crops as it is for the functioning of industry and the maintenance of all life. Around 20 billion tonnes of water are released every day by the Amazon rainforests which generate the rainfall that nourishes crops hundreds or even thousands of miles away. Yet population growth drives ever-greater consumption of this finite resource.

Protection of all water catchment areas, but especially the rainforests, should be our top priority, for without water civilisations perish.

Friday 13th April

Around 1 billion people rely on the world's fisheries for their animal protein, and the fisheries employ about 27 million people. But since 2002 fish catches have steadily declined. Around 70% of fish stocks are being fished unsustainably. Sea beds around the world have been smashed up by bottom-trawling gear, while industrial fishing, using long-line nets, has reduced stocks of tuna and cod to only 10% of what they were 40-50 years ago. The EU Fisheries Policy, by setting quotas, has failed to stem the decline. Limiting the days when trawlers may fish is unpopular with the industry. Establishing no-fish zones is a proven way of restoring fish stocks both inside and outside the zones.

Saturday 14th April

"Ecosystem services" is the term applied to the economic value of wetlands, rainforests, pollinating insects, soil regeneration etc. A 1997 study published in "Nature" put this figure at \$33 trillion – nearly double the global GDP at the time. A 2008 UN Study called "The Economics of Ecosystems & Biodiversity" calculated the annual loss from the destruction of ecosystems

such as rainforest and wetlands at between \$2 and \$4.5 trillion each year. Added to that is the loss of annual output from the declining value of ecosystems. The 2008 banking crash was estimated at a one-off cost of \$2 trillion.

Sunday 15th April

Dear Father, we thank you for this lovely world which you have given us to look after. Teach us how to conserve your handiwork. Show us how to fill our surroundings with Christ-like deeds and to devote our time and resources to restoring what has gone amiss.

Monday 16th April

Britain's first large desalination plant will open this summer at Beckton in east London. Costing £270 million, it will produce brackish water, which will be filtered to remove the salt and supplemented with calcium and magnesium to give it the taste of normal drinking water. Two giant pipes will suck 150 million litres a day from the Thames on the ebb tide and provide the water supply for 1.4 million Londoners. Desalination plants require large amounts of energy to operate effectively. Thames Water is to raise its prices by 6% and forecast further price rises to build reservoirs and new technology.

Tuesday 17th April

More than 51% of renewable energy projects in Germany are now owned by citizens, farmers and community groups, representing £65 billion of private investment. The 11th World Wind Energy Conference takes place in Bonn from 3rd to 5th July entitled "Community Power – Citizens' Power". The director of the World Wind Energy Association said: "If we want to reach 100% renewable energy supply, we have to ensure

that local communities benefit from renewable energy projects. Community and citizen ownership models have a proven track record in achieving this objective."

Wednesday 18th April

In Britain over thirty new renewables co-operatives have been registered since 2008. The Cooperative Group has now committed £1 billion for investment in renewables by 2013, of which 10% is earmarked for community schemes. "The appeal of community energy doesn't just lie in a sense of independence and the chance to earn a few pounds. Schemes can be devised to prioritise the needs of people suffering from fuel poverty, and also provide training and jobs for locals in a sector seen as one of the big growth areas in the future."

In some areas the threat of mining shale gas creates an opportunity for alternative energy. But the sense of ownership is the most powerful incentive. "If you own it, you care about it and want to stick up for it. It's the difference between having something done to you and choosing to do it for yourself."

Thursday 19th April

Undergraduates at Yale have discovered a fungus in the Ecuadorian rainforest that can digest the common plastic polyurethane. The results, published in the Journal of Applied & Environmental Microbiology, could lead to a new way of reducing plastic in the world's landfills. Student Jonathan Russell has isolated an enzyme that the fungus uses to break down the plastic. Yale University believes that this molecule alone could be useful in eliminating waste polyurethane.

Friday 20th April

According to the European Environment Agency's 2011 report, air pollution during 2009 cost Europe 102-169 billion euros in damage to human health and the environment, of which 19 billion euros related to Britain. Half the damage resulted from just 2% of the sites surveyed, the most polluting being power generation plants. One might conclude that we would do better to spend money on reducing air pollution than dealing with the consequences in Britain's hospitals. Two elements is such a policy might be:

Strict application of the 'polluter pays' principle at the main polluting sites such as power stations;
Massive investment in non-polluting renewable energy.

Saturday 21st April

At 10 am today in York Minster a service called "Mission Earth: A Christian Response to Climate Change" will be led by Archbishop Sentamu, the Bishop of Middlesbrough and northern leaders of other denominations, with speakers from Tearfund, John Ray Institute and Operation Noah. Riding Lights will be performing.

Workshops take place from 12 to 4 at De Grey Court, York St. John University, led by Tearfund, Christian Aid, John Ray Institute, CAFOD and Operation Noah. Topics include:
Communicating climate within your congregation;

Practical environmental action to take in your church/community;

The science and risk of climate change.

To book free tickets email:

cconclimatechange@gmail.com or ring 07879372999.

Website: www.CConCC.wikispaces.com