

SUNDAY PLUS

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By Mary Colwell

I feel I know Jeremiah, which is strange as he lived 600 years before Christ. I see glimpses of him all around in modern prophets, in those who speak out despite the personal cost, despite being ridiculed or ignored. Everything Jeremiah did and said was driven

by passion, a feeling so strong he described it as “a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot.” Jeremiah looked at the world and knew he had no choice. In powerful words and deeds, he demanded justice: he urged people to live with God, not against him, and he warned about the dire consequences of self-indulgence and of a life without integrity.

The recent global meetings on protecting nature and mitigating climate change, COPS 15 and 27, opened with Jeremiah-type words. We are carrying out “an orgy of destruction” and we are destroying all of life on earth, including ourselves. They were difficult messages to hear, but then, prophets are rarely soothing. Living with God is not the easy option. To follow Christ may mean to suffer, to go against the grain and to live a life of self-sacrifice for the greater good; this is what we are called to do. All the readings speak of the difficult path to right living, and they are as fresh and relevant today as they ever were, arguably more so as the whole planet is at stake. Modern Jeremiahs are amongst us, and we must listen.

Mary Colwell is an award-winning wildlife broadcaster, writer and environmental campaigner.

“Let us ask the Lord for the grace of sending us the Holy Spirit so that we might follow him with a right intention: for him alone, without vanity, without the desire for power, without the desire for money.” **Pope Francis**

Imitate the children

By Paul Higginson

One of the most encouraging aspects of our current climate crisis has been the energy and commitment of young people in working to prevent environmental catastrophe. Adults must follow their lead. In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis says: “The divine and the human meet in the slightest detail in the seamless garment of God’s creation, in the last speck of

dust of our planet”. God is in every speck of dust. He isn’t somewhere else, he’s all around us, in all of creation. The most urgent question facing us today is how we care for this created world – a world soaked and suffused with the splendour of God. Take time this week to appreciate God’s handiwork, a flower in the garden, rain on the rooftop, a bird flying overhead or even a speck of dust! Then see what practical action you can take to ensure we protect our planet for future generations.

Paul Higginson is a retired teacher, and author of *Doing Christianity: How religion is about what you do, not what you believe.*

Feast of the week
Friday 8 September

Our Lady’s birthday

This was a little child who knew not man,
Nor life, nor all the needed frauds of life,
Nor any compromise, and when she turned
To raise the earthen jar, and faced the airs
Of Spring, she smiled for young security,
And she was glad. These were her own, these lanes
Of Nazareth. She’d known the slope and feel
Of them for all her years, and they had known
Of her, and she was walking now and was
Familiar, and the well she sought not far
Beyond the clustered houses was so old
It had become a part of permanence.

From *A Woman Wrapped in Silence*, John W. Lynch

“Why do I follow Jesus?... Is there vanity in my following of Jesus? Is the desire for power present? Is the desire for money present? It will do us good to examine our hearts and our consciences a little on the need to have a right intention in following Jesus. Do I follow him for his sake alone? This is the journey of holiness.

Pope Francis

Today:
Jeremiah 20:7-9
Romans 12:1-2
Matthew 16:21-27

Monday:
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
Luke 4:16-30

Tuesday:
1 Thessalonians 5:1-6, 9-11
Luke 4:31-37

Wednesday:
Colossians 1:1-8
Luke 4:38-44

Thursday:
Colossians 1:9-14
Luke 5:1-11

Friday:
Micah 5:1-4 or Romans 8:28-30
Matthew 1:1-16, 18-23

Saturday:
Colossians 1:21-23
Luke 6:1-5

Next Sunday:
Ezekiel 33:7-9
Romans 13:8-10
Matthew 18:15-20