



17 February Bishop Keith

Lent2021

Ash Wednesday is one of the most solemn days in the Church's year. I've always found it very moving both to receive ash on my forehead and to give it to others and either hear the words or say them "Dust you are, and to dust you shall return, repent of your sins and follow Christ".

When we hear the words of God to Adam and Eve in Genesis 1 "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth" (Genesis 1:28) the scope of our sin and our need to repent just increases. Following Christ, we find, is being fruitful and filling the earth according to his commandments, and far from being some introverted preoccupation with sex, this command is given as part of the blessing of the whole creation. May God forgive us and lead us to true repentance for turning dominion into selfish exploitation. May the birds of the air, the fish of the sea, as well as all the other creatures know that we realise our existence is as much for their blessing as we know their existence is for our blessing. And may our children and our children's children know it too.

I'm praying the Lord would show me during Lent what repentance is like in all these areas, for what goes on inside my house as well as what goes on outside in the garden, in the supermarket, the supply chain and way beyond. As we receive the forgiveness and grace of Christ, may the birds, the fish and every living thing have cause to be grateful for our dominion and not, because of it, be groaning in grief.

Bishop Keith Sinclair, Bishop of Birkenhead

"God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.'"

Genesis 1:28

Information point

Ever wondered why Christians should care so much about creation and the gift of the Earth? A Rocha explain it beautifully here.

<https://arocha.org.uk/about-us/why-we-do-it/>

A prayer

God our Father,

The strength of all who put their trust in you, mercifully accept our prayers; and because in our weakness, we can do nothing good without you, grant us the help of your grace, that in keeping your commandments we may please you, both in will and deed; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen