

Perceiving The Kingdom

The role of the Christian in relation to the rest of
God's Creation.



Dear

I write this with some hesitation, as people are often inflamed by our subject: either for, or against, or in condemning it as irrelevant.

In a deeply respectful (but not in a fundamentalist) way our starting point is the Book of Genesis and the writings of John; our vision of the Kingdom comes from the prophet Isaiah and The Book of Revelation. Our hope is that together we can be our Father's co-workers in bringing one step closer the state which Isaiah foresaw: that wonderful Kingdom of harmony and peace where God is all-in-all.

Our hope in this venture is not to be apocalyptic about the way we, as the summit of God's creation, have abused the rest of it (although I think anyone has the right to be); or critical of the way the Church or the 'average' Christian is handling the situation (although it behoves us all to be self-critical). And it is certainly not to depress people with statistical predictions, because I believe He who can bring life from death has already overcome the worst that we can do.

We do not think that we have a mission to put other people right, nor do we think it reasonable or possible to expect anyone to make great changes in their lifestyle overnight. As Mother Teresa was fond of saying, we all need converting, and daily. We come in humility as fellow travellers, not as experts.

Rather, our hope is to help each other see with ever greater clarity the glory and wonder of God's creation; His love for each part of it, and our place in it and responsibility for it; and how we are all continually being called to be taking another small step in honouring and caring for it.

Albert Camus, in his novel *The Plague*, has one of his heroes saying something like: 'I try my best never to do any harm, and where I can, to do some good.' Without God that is the best we can hope for. With God our aim (although we will probably never reach it) is to reduce the harm we do to the rest of God's creation to zero, and where we can, to reverse some of the harm already done.

We are sure that this is what God, in his love for all he has made, wants us to do.

Yours in Christ

Fr John Ryder

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