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Picture on front cover: Pulsatilla at Kew Gardens by Quentin Pickard

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Prayer guide for the care of creation

April 2011



“Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you – you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”
(Matthew 6.28-33)

“There is great gain in godliness combined with contentment; for we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it, but if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these.”
(1 Tim. 6.6-8)

Wednesday 1st April.

Growing economies depend to a large extent on luring consumers into discontent with their lifestyle, possessions, health and appearance. The view is always better somewhere else – so we travel. Our gadgetry is always behind someone else's – so we update it. The view in the mirror always leaves something to be desired. Yet we know in our hearts that these attitudes are profoundly un-Christlike. St. Paul wrote: "I have learnt to be content with whatever I have." (Phil. 4.11) If we all did the same, the earth's natural resources would not today be under such dire threat – and we would all be happier.

Saturday 2nd April

The Rev. Peter Owen Jones, presenter of the BBC documentary "How to live a simple life", referred at a recent CEL conference to the "inaudible whisper" which was all the Christian churches offered against the destruction of the natural world. "We need to jump the fence we have built between ourselves and the natural world." He spoke of the "ruthless anthropomorphism" which kept the churches fixated on human concerns. "Placing ourselves above the natural world is madness." He called for action to develop Christian festivals such as Lent, where abstinence stands against consumerism, and other festivals such as Harvest "which synchronises our lives with the life of the planet."

Sunday 3rd April

Lord, as we pray and reflect on the natural disasters which have brought such suffering to the people of Japan, New Zealand, Pakistan and other countries, help us to nurture the bonds which bind our common humanity. We

pray especially for organisations, such as the Children of Peace in the Holy Land, which brings together the innocent victims of conflict by sponsoring projects in the arts, education, health and sports.

Monday 4th April

Europe imports large quantities of soya from South America to feed factory-farmed animals. Soya plantations destroy rainforests, evict communities from their land and poison people with pesticides. A report going through the European Parliament calls on the Commission to submit proposals;

- To increase domestic protein crop production for animal feed
- To promote crop rotation with protein crops as a precaution against crop disease and climate change
- To create market conditions that favour local production over imported products
- To authorise the use of proteins from slaughtered offal for feeding to pigs and poultry
- To support farmers cultivating protein crops in rotation systems which reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve disease control and soil fertility.

These measures could mark a big step forward in making European agriculture more sustainable.

Tuesday 5th April

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in children is characterised by inattentiveness, fidgeting, impulsiveness and hyperactivity. New research has found that perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) found in non-stick products, food packaging and stain- and water-resistant fabrics increase children's risk of ADHD by 12% for

Friday 29th April

The WWF Living Planet Report calculates that humans will need more than 200% of the earth's biocapacity (forests, fisheries and croplands) by 2050.

Do we find another planet? Or will half of humanity have to die?

Dr. John Guillebaud in his new paper "Population matters – Too many people, not enough planet" suggests that there is a more humane way, namely contraception.

The 80 million unplanned pregnancies each year show the extent of the demand. But there are also widespread barriers to the acceptance of contraception, maintained sometimes by religious and political correctness and sometimes by the cultural dominance of men and misinformation about possible side-effects.

Saturday 30th April

"We have not inherited the earth from our grandparents; we have borrowed it from our grandchildren." (Kashmiri proverb)

Costa Rica, Cuba, Iran, Korea, Mexico, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand and southern India are all countries which have reduced their average family size to around two children, without any of the coercion practised in China.

How did they do it?

In southern India women's education was a help.

In Thailand, advertising, media chat and TV documentaries all played their part.

Elsewhere, endorsement by football stars, TV personalities and teenage icons all helped.

In Iran, endorsement by religious leaders was a key factor plus a ruling that only couples with a knowledge of family planning would be allowed a marriage licence.

In Britain and other countries with a high carbon footprint, an avoided pregnancy could have

many times the benefit for global sustainability as in less developed countries. "Those who consume way beyond their share, rich consumers in every country, must massively reduce their footprints, but also relevant is the number of feet. Reducing over-consumption and over-population are two sides of the same coin." (John Guillebaud)

Sources:

Positive News
Green Health Watch Magazine
www.edie.net

Additional Prayers

on even when the path ahead seems beset with difficulties.

Saturday 23rd April

Over 1 million tonnes of waste wood go to landfill each year. The Environment Agency in partnership with the wood industry has produced a draft Quality Protocol with guidelines on how to recover waste wood for use, for example, in making panel boards and landscape materials such as mulch for use in decorative woodchip. The Wood Recyclers Association would like to see animal bedding and biomass uses included in the final document. The consultation ends on April 27th.

Sunday 24th April. Easter Day.

Heavenly Father, Creator of all life on earth, we praise and bless you that you sent your Son to suffer and die for us on the Cross and then, by his Resurrection, to destroy the power of death and win for us the hope of everlasting life. Help us to go forward in the confidence that nothing in life or death can separate us from your loving care. Amen.

Monday 25th April

The "Future of Food & Farming" report advocates improvements in foodcraft skills and the promotion of better diets at all levels of school education. For example, it requires 7 kg. of grain and 15,000 litres of water to produce just 1 kg. of beef, yet only 250 litres are required for 1 kg. of potatoes. Nevertheless, many communities live off livestock in areas that are unsuitable for growing crops, and this will not change.

Tuesday 26th April

The report foresees an increase in grain prices of 30-50% from 1990 to 2050. Climate change will increase prices by a further 50-100%. Oil prices also have a marked effect. The World Food Programme needs to establish an emergency food reserve and financing facilities to help low-income countries facing sudden increases in food prices.

Wednesday 27th April

Agriculture contributes 10-12% of global greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs), rising to 30% when land conversion and other costs are added. More efficient use of water and fertilisers, including recycling, could reduce both GHG emissions and production costs. It was noted that Spanish tomatoes transported to the UK have a lower carbon footprint than UK tomatoes grown in heated greenhouses. New Zealand lamb is 4 times more energy-efficient than UK lamb because of lower inputs of fertilisers and food concentrates.

Thursday 28th April

The UN Food & Agriculture Organisation (FAO) estimates that 1 billion people use wild foods in their diet. Bushmeat and fish provide 20% of protein in at least sixty countries. The report recognises that sustainability cannot be achieved in the absence of food security and that pressure from expanding agriculture has been a major factor in tropical deforestation. Market failures exist in the food system, such as unfair subsidies and trade restrictions. These, if not corrected, will lead to irreversible environmental damage and long-term threats to the food system.

every 1 part per billion ingested. Other evidence suggests that even low levels of PFOA can produce other health problems including hormone disruption, cancer and liver damage.

Wednesday 6th April

Until recently it was thought that the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (once called the Gulf Stream) was slowing down, with consequent cooling of our climate. Satellite observation by NASA has found no overall slowing between 2002 and 2009, but only short-term slowing and speeding-up which, they say is "probably part of a natural cycle." Overall, the AMOC has speeded up slightly since 1993.

Thursday 7th April

The collapse of hundreds of bee colonies has led to many theories as to the causes, but one – mobile phone radiation – refuses to go away. Dr. Kuhn of Landau University placed cordless phone-docking units near a hive which led to 70% of its workers failing to return to the hive after foraging. When Sainuddeen Pattazhy of Sree Narayana College, India, placed mobile phones near beehives, the hives collapsed completely in 5-19 days and the parasites which normally invade abandoned beehives chose not to. His explanation: "Bees' navigational skills depend on the earth's magnetic field. The much stronger electromagnetic waves emitted by mobile phones cloud the bees' perception of the earth's magnetic field, as well as damaging the bees' nervous system."

Friday 8th April

Today and tomorrow, as part of its 10th birthday celebration, the Eden Project is hosting an exhibition by the Cornwall Sustainable Building Trust of training and skills in building sustainable

homes. Solar hot water, solar electricity, biomass boilers, wind power systems and heat pumps will be demonstrated. A timber-framed house will be erected onsite and a biodigester to convert food waste into energy will be demonstrated. Seminars will showcase educational opportunities and possible career paths.

Saturday 9th April

The Buckminster Fuller Challenge is given annually for projects offering "significant potential to solve mankind's most pressing problems". The 2010 award went to Allan Savory who pioneered the use of cattle to mimic the way wild herds move across grasslands. After the herds have moved on, the rains trigger plant growth which acts as a natural carbon pump, sequestering huge levels of carbon into the soil and rejuvenating its fertility. In his Dublin talk, given to the Irish NGO Feasta, entitled "Keeping Cattle: Cause or Cure for the Climate Crisis" he outlined the thinking behind his land restoration schemes in Africa, Australia and both Americas. See www.savoryinstitute.com and www.vimeo.com

Sunday 10th April

Lord God, 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 His Name.

Monday 11th April

Golden Agri-Resources Ltd. (GAR), the world's 2nd biggest palm oil producer, has halted the destruction of key areas of Indonesian forests to

make way for new plantations. GAR's commitment does not prevent it from exploiting other areas of forest, but Greenpeace believes their commitment could signal a shift throughout the industry and eventually lead to full forest and peatland protection.

Tuesday 12th April

Mervyn King, Governor of the Bank of England, said recently: "Of all the many ways of organising banking, the worst is the one we have today." Martin Wolf of the Financial Times has said: "The essence of the present money system is the creation of money, out of nothing, by private banks' often foolish lending." Currently, banks are allowed to gamble our money away and then get it back from the taxpayers when it runs out. The Independent Banking Commission is looking at alternatives to the current system and has invited submissions from (amongst others) the New Economics Foundation and Positive Money.
www.positivemoney.org.uk

Wednesday 13th April

Helena Norberg-Hodge, founder of the International Society for Ecology & Culture (ISEC), has produced a documentary film called "The Economics of Happiness" which shows how localised economies can heal the earth and restore our well-being. It includes interviews with Vandana Shiva, Andrew Simms of NEF and Richard Heinberg author of "Peak Oil" and "Peak Everything". She says: "Almost all treatments for alcohol and drug addiction include group process and community building. Communities heal. Communities create happiness. Localisation is a path that can bring benefits very quickly if people understand and turn towards others."
Thursday 14th April

Many homeowners and communities find the cost of installing renewable energy too great to contemplate. Now Forum for the Future has produced "Funding Revolution", a guide to setting up and running low-carbon revolving funds, with step-by-step guidance. The initial investment in a local energy project is repaid from revenues generated from lower energy bills, selling energy and benefiting from feed-in tariffs. After the initial investment is repaid, the revenue can be used to fund further projects – hence the revolving fund. Other benefits include:

- Giving local homeowners and organisations a say in the running of the fund
- Fostering collective ownership and pride in becoming a low-carbon community
- Households becoming more energy-conscious, taking an interest in the environment and becoming more resilient to economic and social pressures.

www.forumforthefuture.org/files/Funding

Friday 15th April

The Government has decided that solar PV projects producing more than 250 kW will be paid 8.5 p. per kWh instead of the current 30.7 p., though installations up to 50 kW will continue to be paid 32.9 p. The new rates are designed to stop all the money going to large solar farms rather than individual households. Greg Barker, the climate change minister, said: "I want to make sure we capture the benefits of fast falling costs to allow more homes to benefit from feed-in tariffs, rather than see that money go in bumper profits to a small number of big investors."

Saturday 16th April

The Government's new £860 million Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) will, from October 2012, assist up to 15,000 householders to install equipment such as solar thermal panels, biomass boilers and heat pumps to generate heat in their homes. The scheme will also increase the uptake of this equipment by businesses by a factor of seven by 2020. Currently, half of UK carbon emissions come from generating heat and over 95% of that is generated from fossil fuels. The RHI will reduce carbon emissions by 44 million tonnes up to 2020 – equivalent to the output of 20 typical gas-fired power stations.

Sunday 17th April

O Lord God, when thou givest to thy servants any great matter, grant us also to know that it is not the beginning but the continuing of the same until it be thoroughly finished which yieldeth the true glory, through him that for the finishing of thy work laid down his life, thy Son Jesus Christ. (Sir Francis Drake)

Monday 18th April

Sir John Beddington, the Government's Chief Scientific Adviser, predicts that by 2030 the world's growing population will require 50% more food and energy and 30% more fresh water while, at the same time, mitigating and adapting to climate change. He asks: "Can 9 billion people be fed equitably, healthily and sustainably? Can we cope with the future demand for fresh water? Can we provide enough energy to supply the growing population coming out of poverty? Can we do all this while mitigating and adapting to climate change?"

Tuesday 19th April

A report commissioned by Sir John called "The Future of Food & Farming: Challenges and Choices for Global Sustainability" was published in January. It identifies five challenges: Food security as global population approaches 9 billion (currently 6.4 billion); Food supply and price stability; Ending world hunger; Protecting food supply against climate change; Maintaining biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Wednesday 20th April

Critical to increasing food productivity will be an increase in the skills and knowledge base of food producers including women. Equally important is to improve people's rights to land and natural resources so as to encourage long-term investment. China's land reforms have been a major factor in increasing its agricultural production.

Thursday 21st April

Nearly half of all the food grown may be lost or wasted by spillage, contamination, disease and poor storage. In the UK some 25% of all purchased food is wasted in the home. A family could save £680 a year simply by managing its food better.

Friday 22nd April. Good Friday.

Lord Jesus, as we dwell on your great love for humankind in treading the path of the Cross for our sakes, help us to take up our own crosses in the struggle to protect your beautiful world. Give us strength of purpose, and the courage to go