

Do not worry

Jo Jones *reflects on* Psalm 136 and Matthew 6:25-end

God's "steadfast love endures for ever". The psalmist repeats this phrase while telling the story of God's creation of and care for the world. Yet how hard it is to remember this and how easy to worry our lives away! I'm worried about my job – I'm worried about my relationships – I'm worried about my worrying! I become trapped and exhausted. Then I read Jesus' words, "do not worry... Consider the lilies of the field".

I travelled in Ethiopia when war was creating famine. I stood among queues of people who were desperately thin, waiting to receive rations which they had walked ten or more miles to collect. I wondered how these people continued to believe in a God who promised to give them what they needed. An Ethiopian aid worker told me, "When you have a good harvest you think it is all your doing. When you have a poor harvest you know you are dependent on God for everything. Then you are close to God."

Our retired priest preached that the key to past fears is forgiveness and God's acceptance of us; the key to present fears is courage, founded on the conviction that God is with us; and the key to our future fears is hope, knowing that God will be there with us. Thank God. 🌸



A greener church

Part 2 – biodiversity

by David Shreeve

David Shreeve continues his series on how churches can become greener.

Churchyards can be a vital haven for biodiversity which is often struggling in our modern world. Our urban churchyards can be vital green lungs for the community and in rural environments they are often spared the agro-chemicals which are sprayed nearby. Wildlife areas in churchyards often attract complaints that the churchyard is not looked after, so remember to put up a sign giving details of the plants and animals making their home there.

Not every church has a churchyard, so look to see where a bird box could be fixed. Remember that changes to churchyards and tree plantings can involve official permission, but some churches have made new friends by encouraging volunteer gardeners who may not have gardens of their own. Churchyard flowers can be used to decorate the church without involving any air miles – unlike most in the high street.

You can get help and advice from: www.churchofengland.org/about/church-england-environment-programme 🌸

“Take time, slow down, be still, be awake to the Divine Mystery that looks so common and so ordinary yet is wondrously present.”

Edward Hays (1931-2016), author, artist and storyteller

As we journey through life, may we feel your steadfast love with us, Lord. In times of joy, of ordinariness, of terrible pain, may we know your mercy, and have courage and hope. Amen.

St Scholastica

by Alan Jefferies

St Scholastica, patron saint of religious sisters, is honoured in the Common Worship lectionary on Tuesday. Alan Jefferies considers her life and legacy.

Born in Italy around 480 AD, Scholastica was the sister (possibly the twin) of Benedict of Nursia, founder of Western monasticism. At that time a young Roman woman of her class would probably have remained in her father's house until she either married or entered religious life. From time to time several women would form a community. Scholastica followed this route and took it

further, establishing a convent near Monte Cassino, where Benedict had founded his famous monastery.

The siblings remained close throughout their lives, meeting for spiritual conversation and prayer. One story tells how, during one such visit, Scholastica prayed for a storm to delay Benedict's departure so they could continue their discussion. Legend has it that three days after this, Benedict saw his sister's soul leaving the earth and ascending to heaven in the form of a white dove. He had her body brought to his monastery, where he had it laid in the tomb he had prepared for himself. 🌸