

16th February 2020
2nd Sunday before Lent
Sexagesima
Green



Collect

Almighty God, who alone can bring order to the unruly wills and passions of sinful humanity: give your people grace so to love what you command and to desire what you promise, that, among the many changes of this world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Genesis 1-2:3 English Standard Version (ESV)

The Creation of the World

1¹ In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ²The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. ³And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. ⁴And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day. ⁶And God said, “Let there be an expanse^[a] in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” ⁷And God made^[b] the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. ⁸And God called the expanse Heaven.^[c] And there was evening and there was morning, the second day. ⁹And God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. ¹⁰God called the dry land Earth,^[d] and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. ¹¹And God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants^[e] yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth.” And it was so. ¹²The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ¹³And there was evening and there was morning, the third day. ¹⁴And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons,^[f] and for days and years, ¹⁵and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. ¹⁶And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. ¹⁷And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, ¹⁸to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day. ²⁰And God said, “Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds^[g] fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens.” ²¹So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ²²And God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” ²³And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day. ²⁴And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.” And it was so. ²⁵And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ²⁶Then God said, “Let

us make man^h in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, “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 heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”²⁹ And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food.³⁰ And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so.³¹ And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

The Seventh Day, God Rests

2¹ Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.² And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done.³ So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

Footnotes: a. or *a canopy*; also verses 7,8,14,15,17,20. b. or *fashioned*; also verse 16. c. or *Sky*; also verses 9,14,15,17,20,26,28,30, 2:1 d. or *Land*; also verses 11,12,22,24,25,26,28,30; 2:1 e. or *small plants*; also verses 12,29. f. or *appointed times*. g. or *flying things*; see Leviticus 11:19–20. h. The Hebrew word for *man (adam)* is the generic term for mankind and becomes the proper name *Adam*.

Comment: The Genesis passage is a magnificent poem tells of God’s creation of the world in an orderly fashion during a six day period. It presents a faith statement not a credible scientific hypothesis. While science may be able to give us plausible understanding of how and when the universe came into being, it cannot take us beyond the mystery of the beginning to God’s gracious spiritual purpose as this poem does. That theme is found in the repeated refrain, “And God saw that it was good,” after each act of creation, and the final Sabbath blessing in verses 2:3.

Matthew 6:25-34 English Standard Version (ESV)

Do Not Be Anxious

6²⁵ “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?²⁶ Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?²⁷ And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?²⁸ And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin,²⁹ yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.³⁰ But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?³¹ Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’³² For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.³⁴ “Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Footnotes: a. or *a single cubit to his stature*; a *cubit* was about 18 inches or 45 centimetres.

Comment: With the exception of the Lord's Prayer, is there a better known part of the Sermon on the Mount than this? The core of the whole passage is in the very first sentences. The rest is elaboration of the issue: in whom or what have we placed our trust? From the moment we are born, security (money & health) is every person's main concern. Jesus spoke of the birds and the flowers as examples of perfect trust. We all need to seek and do God's will. God loves us so much that God will provide for the resources we need to be God's faithful servants in whatever we are called to be and do. Much is made of the money question. Jesus was not minimising the importance of adequate resources for daily living. He was making sure that those in his audience did not seek those things above all else and neglect the true source of security – God.

Psalm 136 *Confitemini* Grail Psalter

℟️ O give thanks to the Lord for his love endures for ever.

¹ Alleluia! O give thanks to the Lord for he is good,
for his love endures for ever.

² Give thanks to the God of gods
for his love endures for ever.

³ Give thanks to the Lord of lords,
for his love endures for ever; ℟️

⁴ who alone has wrought marvellous works,
for his love endures for ever;

⁵ whose wisdom it was made the skies,
for his love endures for ever;

⁶ who fixed the earth firmly on the seas,
for his love endures for ever. ℟️

⁷ It was he who made the great lights,
for his love endures for ever;

⁸ the sun to rule in the day,
for his love endures for ever;

⁹ the moon and the stars in the night,
for his love endures for ever. ℟️

¹⁰ The first-born of the Egyptians he smote,
for his love endures for ever.

¹¹ He brought Israel out from their midst,
for his love endures for ever;

¹² arm outstretched, with power in his hand,
for his love endures for ever. ℟️

¹³ He divided the Red Sea in two,
for his love endures for ever;

¹⁴ he made Israel pass through the midst,
for his love endures for ever;

¹⁵ he flung Pharaoh and his force in the sea,
for his love endures for ever. ℟️

¹⁶ Through the desert his people he led,
for his love endures for ever.

¹⁷ Nations in their greatness he struck,
for his love endures for ever.

¹⁸ Kings in their splendour he slew,
for his love endures for ever.

✠ O give thanks to the Lord for his love endures for ever.

¹⁹ Sihon, king of the Amorites,
for his love endures for ever;

²⁰ and Og, the king of Bashan,
for his love endures for ever. ✠

²¹ He let Israel inherit their land,
for his love endures for ever.

²² On his servant their land he bestowed,
for his love endures for ever.

²³ He remembered us in our distress,
for his love endures for ever. ✠

²⁴ And he snatched us away from our foes,
for his love endures for ever.

²⁵ He gives food to all living things,
for his love endures for ever.

²⁶ To the God of heaven give thanks,
for his love endures for ever. ✠

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit,
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

Comment: In this psalm, one group says something and another group answers. Perhaps it was the psalm they used in Ezra 3:11. There it says, “They answered each other, praising and thanking the LORD. They said, ‘He is good. His kind love will always continue to Israel.’” The Jews called this psalm “the great hallel”. Other hallels are Psalms 113-118 and 135. They are psalms that praise the LORD (alleluia = Praise the LORD), But this psalm is different from the other psalms. One group of people tell part of the story of what God has done. Then the other people repeat a chorus (some words that are the same each time). The chorus says, “Because his kind love will always continue”. “Kind love” is a very special Bible word. The Jews wrote the psalms in their own language, Hebrew. The Hebrew word we translated “kind love” is “hesed”. Really, there is no English word that can translate “hesed”. “Kind love” is the best we can do. It comes from the old English Bible that translated it “lovingkindness”.

Post Communion

Merciful Father, who gave Jesus Christ to be for us the bread of life, that those who come to him should never hunger: draw us to the Lord in faith and love, that we may eat and drink with him at his table in the kingdom, where he is alive and reigns, now and for ever. **Amen**

Blessing

Christ the Son of God, born of Mary, fill you with his grace to trust his promises and obey his will; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**