

Genesis 1:1-2:3 & Matthew 6:25-end
2nd Sunday before Lent
(23-2-14)

We read right at the very beginning of the Bible that God made the world. There will be some people here who believe that, some people that don't and many who probably wonder about it and are not really sure.

Firstly I must tell you that the Bible is NOT a scientific textbook and makes no statements about HOW the world, and indeed people, came into being. It merely tells us that God caused it all to happen, so you are totally free to go off and wonder and research about the Big-Bang or Evolution. That is all a different matter – all our reading says is that God made it all.

Secondly, I hope you noticed that the reading said that God made people in His image, male and female He created them. Being made in His image does not mean that we look like Him but that we are like Him in lots of ways. For example, we are creative like Him.

Obviously we are not as capable as Him – when you see the wonders all around us in the world we can't equal that. But we know all too well that many people have the most wonderful artistic capabilities and produce some pretty breathtaking stuff don't they? And often even though we may think that we're not artistic we can produce a lovely looking garden, cake or even a good bit of wallpapering.

But, even if you think that you are still not creative, let me prove you wrong. We can see very clearly this morning that we are creative people just by looking at Charlotte here. If that's not a wonderful picture of what we can create I don't know what is! God is at the very centre and source of it all, firstly calling creation into being through the creative power of his love. And then in the parental longing for children and the creative urge of the artistic are the human reflection of the divine love which fashioned us.

Our Bible readings today celebrate the love and care of our God over everything. All around us, under us and over us – totally surrounding us. Jesus shows a wonderfully childlike calm and

relaxed assurance about this. He wants us to know and share that assurance that God is everywhere caring for us. For many of us so much of our time is spent anxiously worrying about things which we have no control over. Jesus wants us to know that it is not God's will that we should go through life harassed and agitated like this.

This is an area in which we can learn a lot from young children. It's something that's so easy to see today with those baby carrier 'things'. I don't know about you but I think that parents look like they've just bought a baby in a supermarket and are carrying them around in the basket! Even royalty! But they are a good visual aid for us in what Jesus means by us not worrying and allowing God to take the strain.

Babies and toddlers are so good at accepting the way they drop off to sleep in one place and wake up somewhere completely different aren't they? In the meantime Mum, Dad or Granny and Granddad have vacuumed and washed up, perhaps fixed them into the car seats if they weren't already in them, driven through the traffic and the road works and emerged at the supermarket. The sleeping child trusts that the parent will be looking after them.

Unlike the child us grown-ups have taken a whole life-time to learn to distrust and start worrying about everything.

Jesus tells us to relearn that trust in our Parent God again, so we can live freely, basking in the faithful love that will never let us down. It is this security which can enable us to meet and cope with all the inevitable stresses and strains of living if our roots are firmly fixed in what is greater and more profound than anything else. If that trust in God is in place, everything else becomes manageable and less threatening.

And let's face it, in the grand scheme of things many of the things we fret or worry about are really rather pathetic aren't they. Going grey or bald (or both!), not knowing what to wear (bet there's been a bit of that going on about today and in church the answer is always long-johns!). Being the wrong shape – does my bum look big in this – and if it does, will that mean that people won't like me?

They're the kind of things we all waste our time and energy worrying about. Jesus was sad to see people worrying their lives away, and he wanted them to be free of this constant worrying.

And carrying that little lot around with us is tiring, if they were all in boxes they'd make our arms ache, because they are not in boxes but in our minds they make our brains and our hearts ache instead. In that Gospel reading we had earlier Jesus is saying, 'Put all those worries down they're heavy to carry and are making you ache.'

I expect many of you will be thinking 'that's alright for her to say, she doesn't know about the worries I've got'. I can tell you that being a vicar, being a Christian does not exclude us from the concerns that come from living in the real world. Being a Christian does mean that I know which way to turn for help. That coming regularly to hear the Bible explained and therefore learning to better understand the maker's instructions for how He meant me to live is extremely helpful. It enables me to truly be able to give Him my burdens and live as He meant me to. Jesus wants us to know that although life is bound to be full of difficult and uncomfortable times as well as easy and happy times, we don't need to worry about it as well as live through it! That makes it twice as bad for us. The way to be free of worry is not to be massively rich or refuse to grow up, or bury your head in the sand and pretend not to see the problems. The way to be free of worrying yourself sick is to trust that your Parent God loves you, likes you, and is well able to help you cope with everything you'll face in your life.

Jesus suggests we live one day at a time, instead of worrying about things that might never happen, or which are bound to happen, and God will bring us safely through it all to heaven, where we will be safe with God for ever.

Paradoxically if we do begin to feel that our survival is not threatened by lots of worries and concerns then we are able and willing to take risks, and accept disappointments and pain without being overwhelmed by them.

Our creative and loving God has given us so many wonderful things in this beautiful world. If God takes all this care over everything He makes, then we can be sure He will take great care of us too. We don't need to waste our time worrying and being anxious, because our God is the powerful creative God who brought the whole universe into being and us into life.