

## Our thanks

- *The (former) Anglican Social Justice Working Group, Diocese of Dunedin in 2005, who did the mahi to create the first booklet, which this edition is based on.*
- *Archbishop Rowan Williams for his inspiring dedications to the world God has created and his passion for its redemption.*
- *Mai & Dan Lander for their creative and thoughtful reimagining of this inspiring resource, and Mai for her creative direction.*

# GOD'S EARTH, OUR HOME.

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Gods Earth, our Home : a study guide

Commissioned by the Social Justice Unit, Anglican Church in ANZ&P, Jan 2020

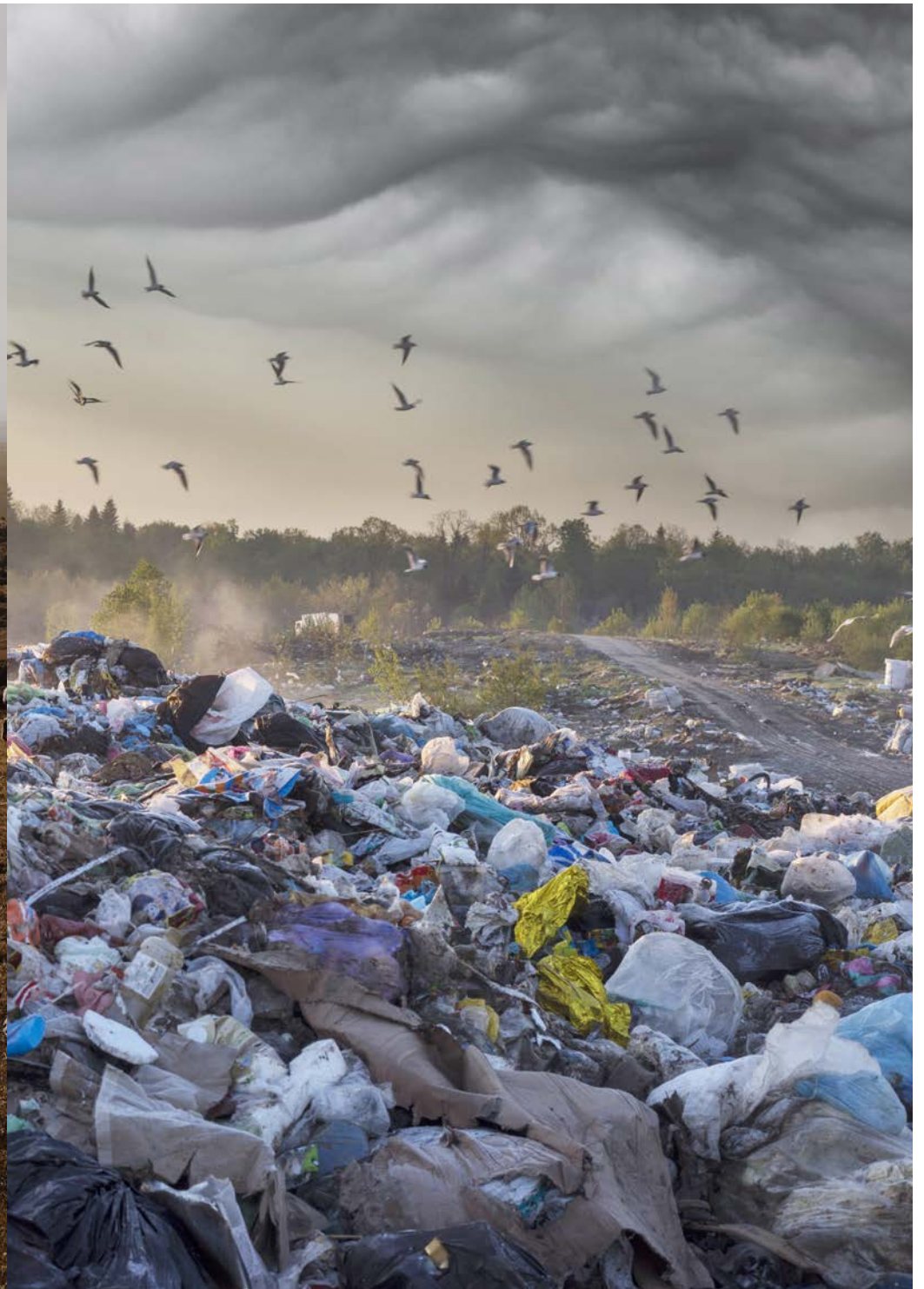
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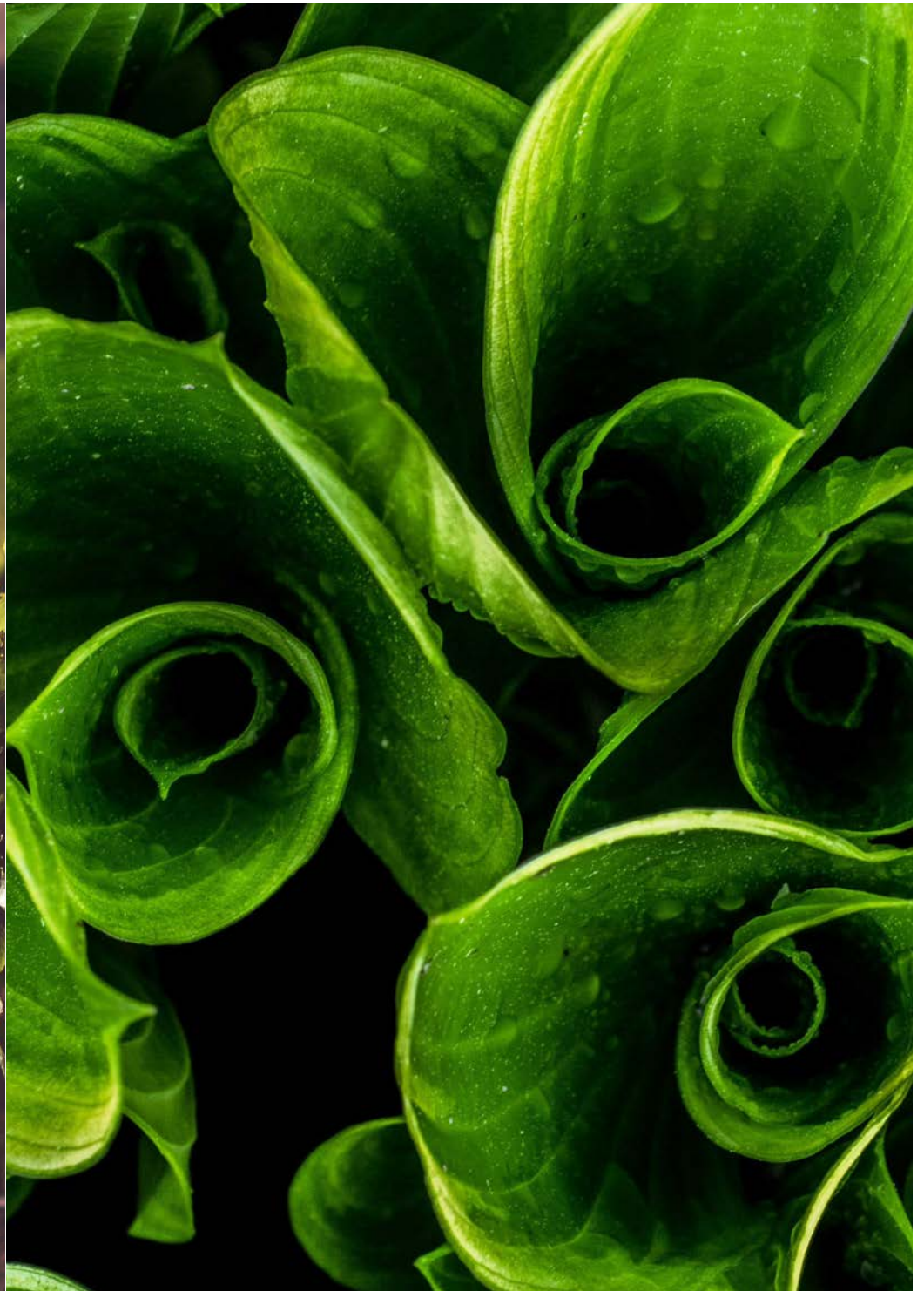
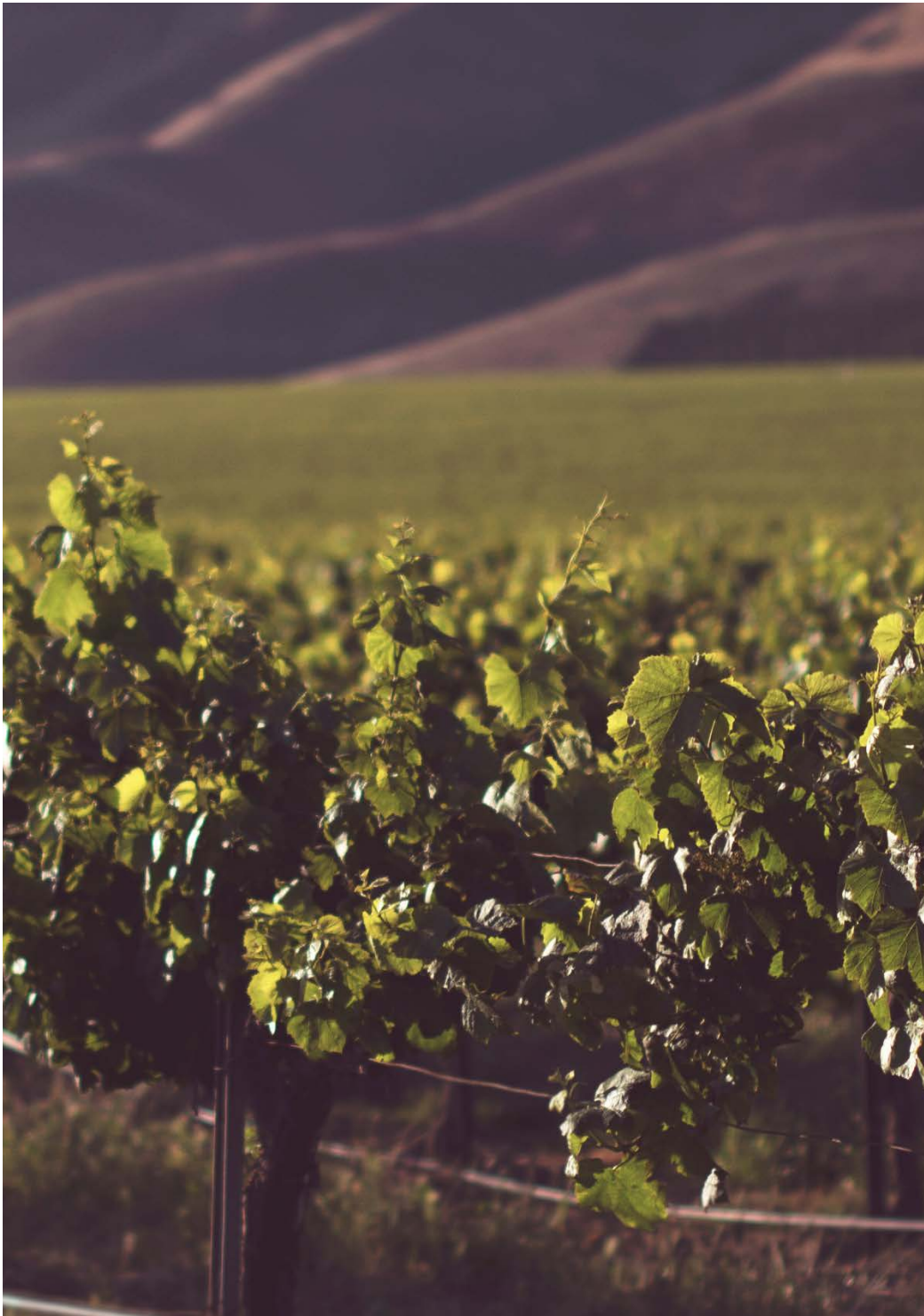
## Journal entry

1. Write a letter to a young person, real or imaginary, outlining your hopes for them in their life decisions about career choices and attitudes to wealth.









## Closing Prayer

*Christ of the poor,  
forgive us for  
keeping silence in the face of injustice  
and for buying our dreams;  
for not sharing bread and wine,  
love and land,  
among us, now.*

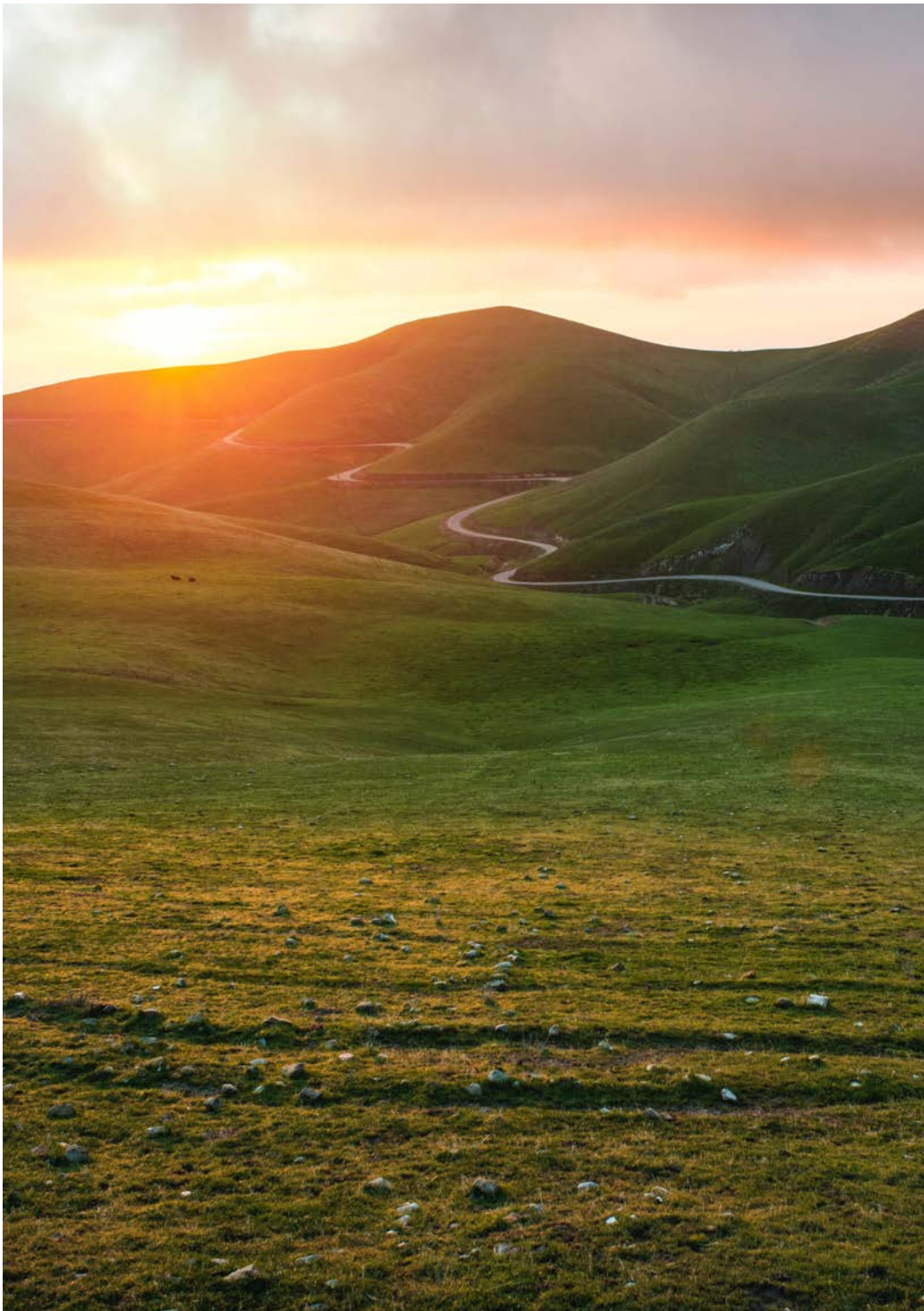
*Prayer from Central America*

To celebrate Earth Day's 50th anniversary this year (April 2020), please enjoy this redesigned and repurposed resource of God's Earth, our home.

In 2005 Archbishop Rowan Williams gave this series of lectures on his belief of how we are called to live in God's Earth. From this a wonderful study was birthed and now we bring you God's Earth, Our home 2.0. As we dive into this updated study we pray that it is just as relevant and challenging for today's climate. May God open our hearts, our minds and our actions as we look to honour her and the home we have been given.

We hope that this resource is both inspiring and challenging as you journey together through the weeks and explore what it looks like to live in this beautiful world and endeavour to bring about restoration and reconciliation between all of God's creation. May we learn, live and love in all that is good.





## Preparing for the Eucharist.

In your final session, you might like to conclude this study with Eucharist. If you don't have a priest, deacon or licensed lay minister in your group get in touch with your church office. They will be able to assist you with the organisation of the service. In preparation for the Eucharist, and over the week to come, you might like to reflect on the following:

1. How does the Lord's Supper symbolise the relationship between humankind, creation, and God?
2. In what ways does our weekly celebration of the Eucharist challenge us to rethink the way we relate to the environment and each other?
3. How should we re-read the idea of humankind's dominion over God's creatures in Genesis 1:26-28 in light of the Lord's Supper and Jesus' death and resurrection?



## Table Of Contents

How to use	9
Week 1 Oikos; The House We live in	11
Week 2 Fully Human; Technology Our Saviour?	27
Week 3 The Jubilee	43
Week 4 All-Consuming; Justice for the Earth	61
Week 5 Commonwealth; Wealth and Sharing Resources	79
Credits	96







## Prayer

*Bread and wine;  
gifts of God for the people of God.  
May we who share these gifts  
be found in Christ  
and Christ in us*

*ANZPB, p.472*

## How to use

This resource has been created as a guide to take you through a 5 week exploration on how we can live, love and redeem the God created world around us. It would be ideal for a small group study or as a personal study.

This file is best printed into a double sided booklet using A4 paper. However we recommend using this as an electronic resource via computer, tablet or phone (when possible) to save on resource consumption.

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## Readings and Discussion

Read Acts 2:44-47

1. How can Christian faith communities today honour the example set by the early Church?
2. Are all Christians called to follow their example? What might the implications of this be?





# oikos

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the house we live in

Opening Prayer

*Bless to me, O God,  
Each thing my eye sees;  
Bless to me, O God,  
Each sound my ear hears;  
Bless to me, O God,  
Each odour that goes to my nostrils;  
Bless to me, O God,  
Each taste that goes to my lips;  
Each note that goes to my song,  
Each ray that guides my way,  
Each thing that I pursue.*

*Carmina Gadelica III – Celtic*

## Reflection By Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury

“The two words, ecology and economy, relate to the same central concept. An oikos is a house, a dwelling-place: ecology is the science of what makes up a dwelling place, an environment, the way it works and holds together, the ‘logic’ of a material setting; and economy is the law that regulates behaviour in an environment, the active ‘housekeeping’ that manages what is at hand.

We cannot continue to pretend to ‘keep house’ for the human race if we refuse to pay any attention to where in the house the gas pipes and electricity wires are laid, which walls are supporting walls, or where the water is carried off by the guttering.

We shall not be able adequately to deal with our crisis of ‘housekeeping’ without the sense of being a guest in the oikos of our world, the sense that ought to keep together the logic (governing principles) of the household, and the discipline of the household, ecology and economy.”

## Going deeper

1. The Archbishop’s definition of wealth is very different from that which immediately comes to mind.

How would you define wealth?

How does your relationship with the natural world enrich your life?

2. How do you react to the idea that the environment is not just there to serve our needs?

What would it mean for humanity to ‘rejoin the rest of creation’?

3. How does the pursuit of financial wealth and the enjoyment of great material possessions, impact on the environment?

Is this the main cause of environmental degradation?

4. Those concerned for social justice work to improve standards of living for those on low incomes.

Is this compatible with our critique of the pursuit of wealth?











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When we can imagine what is materially around us as existing in relation to something other than our own purposes, we are free to be surprised, educated and enlarged by it.

Christianity not only has its challenges in the Sermon on the Mount to anxiety about controlling the environment, prohibiting us from identifying wealth with possession; it also has its sacramental tradition which presents the material order as raw material for the communication of God's love – the Eucharist as the effective symbol of God's action in creating a radically different human society, not characterised by rivalry and struggle for resources. At the center of Christian practice is a rite in which all are equally fed by one gift, and in which material things are identified symbolically with the self-offering of Christ."

## Going deeper

1. How does it feel returning to the special place you regard as "home"?

How protective of that place are you?

Can you relate to the whole planet in the same way?

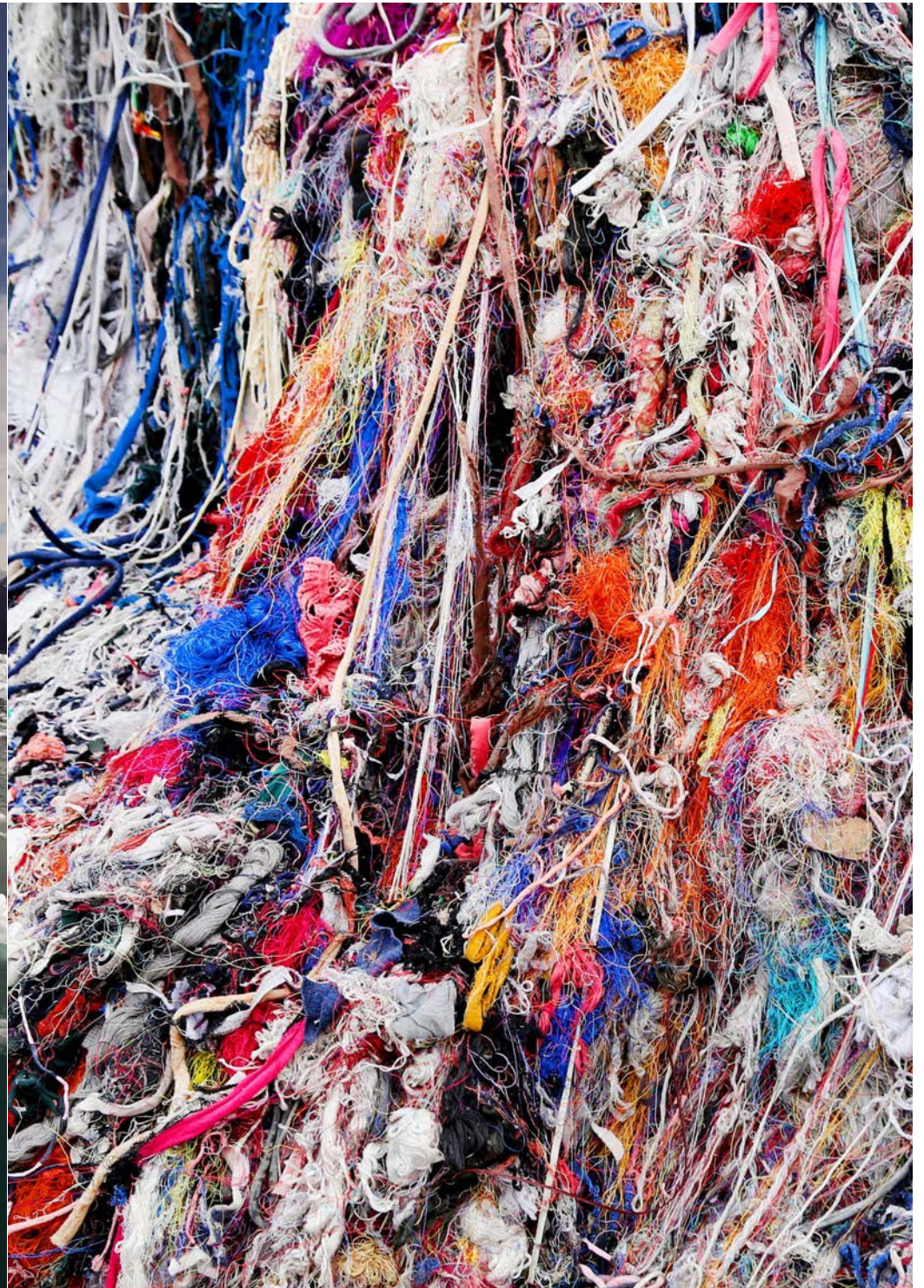
2. In your own oikos economy (e.g. buying food, clothes, petrol, using electricity) do you make connections with the wider 'inhabited world'?

What resources have gone into the items, their transport and packaging, and what dangerous 'extras' have been released into the environment?

3. Homes require a lot of effort and maintenance to keep them working. How well do you think humanity understands the processes that keep the Earth functioning?

What could happen if we continue to ignore the critical importance of allowing the natural world to function normally?







## Reflection By Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury

“All the great religious traditions, in their several ways, insist that personal wealth is not to be seen in terms of reducing the world to what the individual can control and manipulate for whatever exclusively human purposes may be most pressing. Wealth is access to the ‘capital’ of the world as it is, access to the truth and reality that can be discovered when we are set free from our narrow and self-directed concerns – a discovery that both individuals and societies need to make. As such it is access to the depth of our own being, to the rich capacity of the world around to generate in us joy and amazement as well as practical sustenance, and to the final depth of reality which is the love of God as the source of all gifts.

What if we believed that the wealthy or secure person was one whose relationship with the environment was one in which actual enjoyment of and receptivity to the environment played the most significant part? This suggests something of a paradox. In order fully to access, enjoy and profit from our environment, we need to see it as something that does not exist just to serve our needs. Or, to put it another way, we are best served by our environment when we stop thinking of it as there to serve us. >>

## Readings and Discussion

### Read Genesis 1:26-28

1. What does it mean to say that humankind is created in the image of God?
2. If we are created in the image of God, what does it mean to say we have “dominion” over God’s creatures?
3. What, then, is meant by the command to “fill the earth and subdue it”?

### Read Psalm 104:1-25

1. Imagining the natural world as a house/tent-home is clearly not a new idea. Describe how the psalmist sees God’s relationship with the Earth.
2. A number of ecological concepts are described and explored. Where in the psalm can you see things like biodiversity, habitat, food chains, the water cycle, ecological niches? What else?
3. How does the psalmist see people fitting into the natural order and God’s relationship with humanity? Compare with your thoughts on Genesis.

## Prayer

*Merciful God,  
We have sinned in what we have  
thought and said,  
in the wrong we have done,  
and in the good we have not done.  
We have sinned in ignorance;  
we have sinned in weakness;  
we have sinned through our own  
deliberate fault.  
We are truly sorry. We repent and turn  
to you.  
Forgive us, for our Saviour Christ's sake,  
And renew our lives to the glory of your  
name. Amen*

*ANZPB P.407*

# commonwealth

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## wealth and sharing resources

### Opening Prayer

*God, you heap your love upon us  
like a mother providing for her family's needs,  
embracing her child with tenderness.*

*Forgive us  
when, like spoilt children,  
we treat your generosity as our right,  
or hug it possessively to ourselves.*

*Give us enough trust to live secure in your love  
and to share it freely with others  
in open-handed confidence  
that your grace will never run out.*

*Amen*

*Jan Berry, Sheffield*









## Journal entry

1. Take 10 items from your shopping this week and list them. Can you visualise the hands that have prepared them?

Write about who and what you see.

2. See if you can assess how these goods' production, transport and packaging has affected the Earth and its people:

In what ways can you change your shopping habits so you are contributing to a just and sustainable world?





## Making it Happen

1. What changes might you make individually and collectively to reduce your impact on the ecosystem?

Try to begin one of those between now and when you meet again.

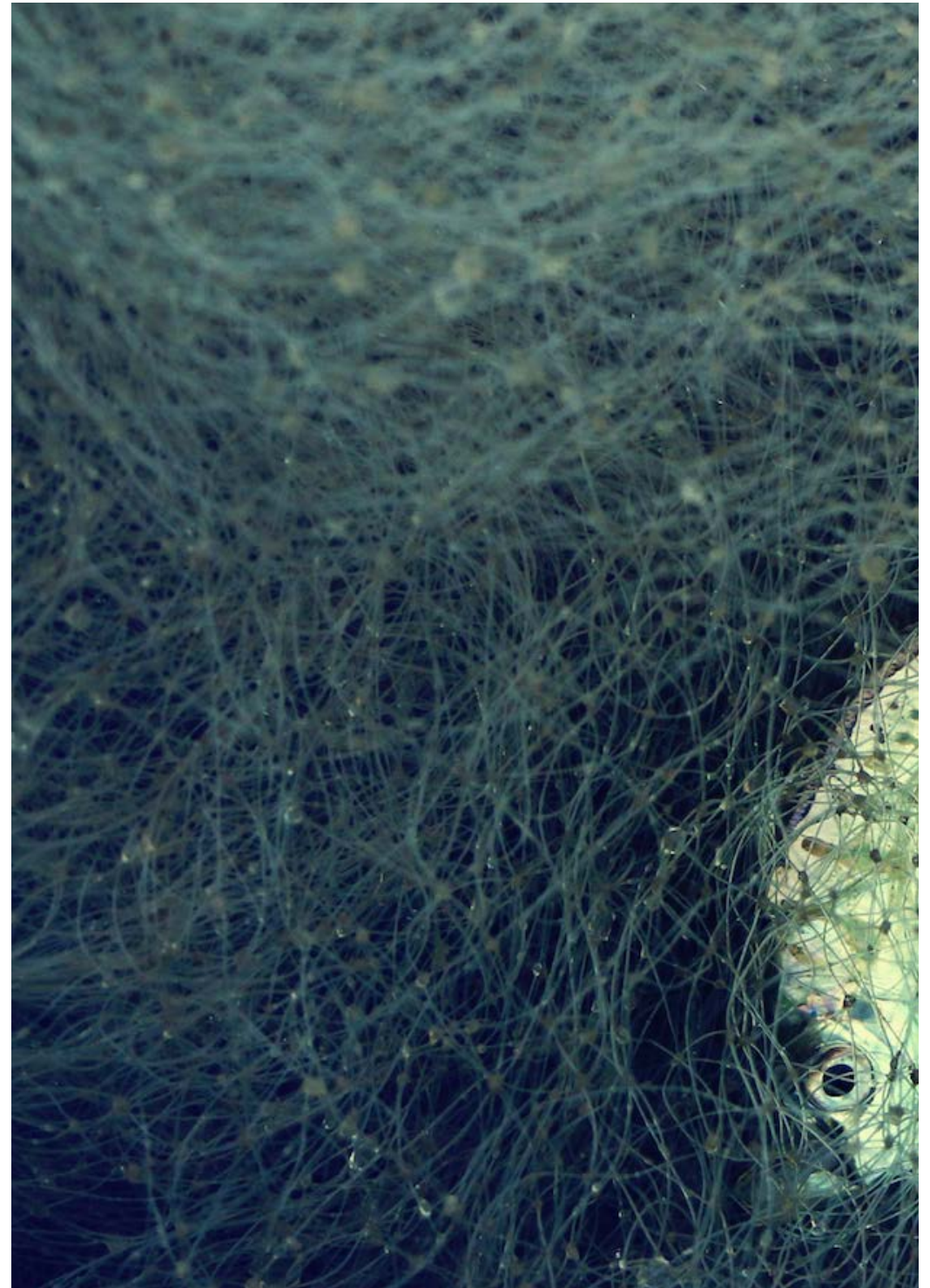
2. What can you ask local or central government to do to reduce our society's impact on the ecosystem?

3. How can you engage your local community in conversations around what you have been learning today?

## Closing Prayer

*O God,  
grant us a deeper sense of fellowship with  
all living things,  
our brothers and sisters to whom in  
common with us  
you have given this earth as home.  
We recall with regret  
that in the past we have acted high-handedly  
and cruelly in exercising our dominion  
over them  
Thus, the voice of the earth  
which should have risen to you in song  
has turned into a groan of travail.  
May we realise that all these creatures  
also live for themselves and for you,  
not for us alone.  
They too love the goodness of life as we do,  
and serve you better in their way  
than we do in ours living it.*

*Saint Basil of Ceasarea*



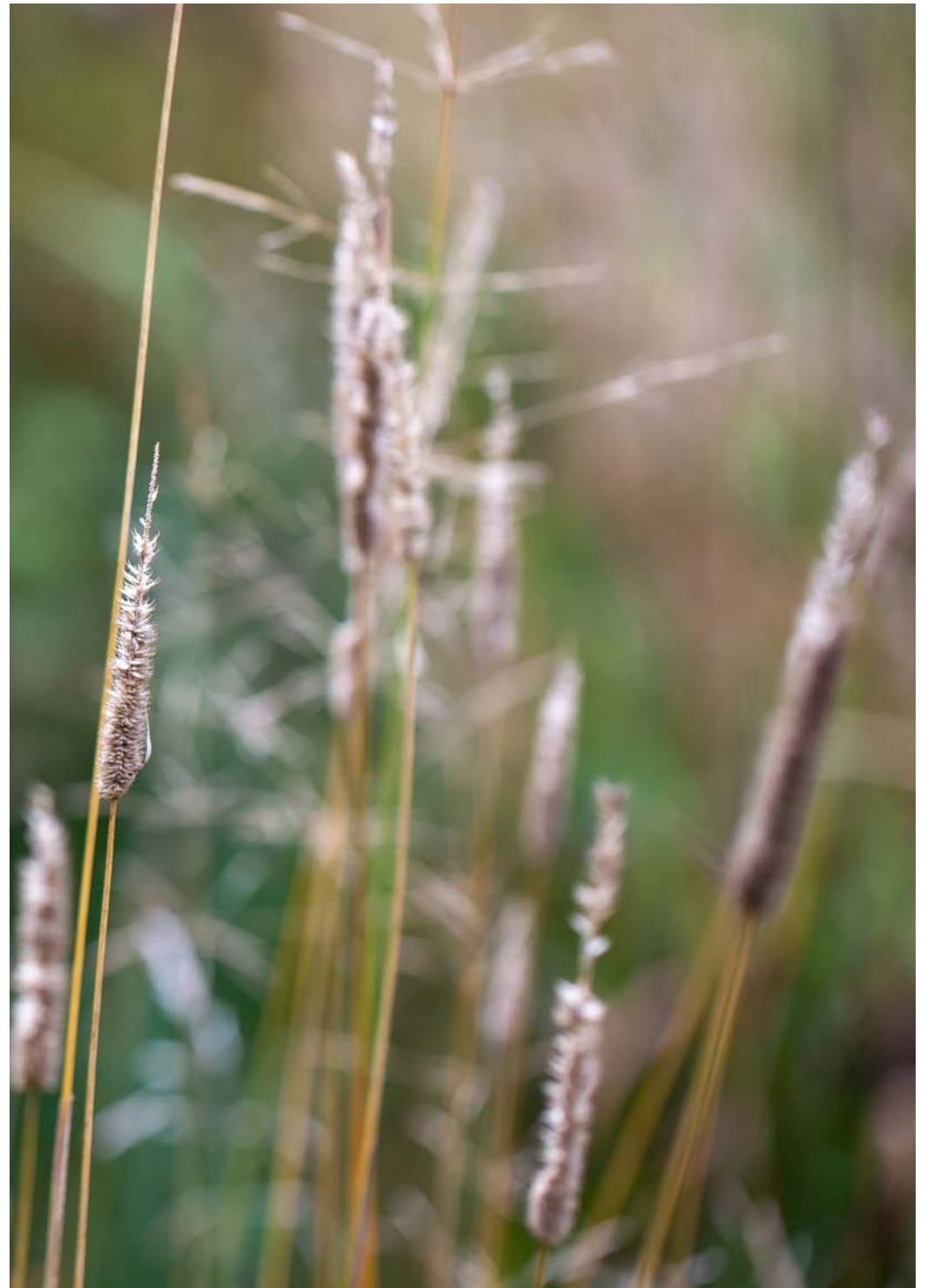


## Closing Prayer

*Oh God, whose word is fruitless  
when the mighty are not put down,  
the humble remain humiliated,  
the hungry are not filled, and the rich are:  
make good your word, and begin with us.  
Open our hearts and unblock our ears  
to hear the voices of the poor  
and share their struggle;  
and send us away empty with longing  
for your promises to come true  
in Jesus Christ.*

*Amen*

*Janet Morley - "Tell Out My Soul"*





## Making it Happen

The contents of our shopping bags connect us to the Earth, from which the goods originated, and to the people who produced them.

1. Familiarise yourself with - and introduce family, friends and neighbours to - fairly traded goods.
2. Work to make your community/town/parish become a Fair Trade one.

(Tea and coffee is an easy place to start - ask your supermarket or visit a Trade Aid shop for more ideas and resources).

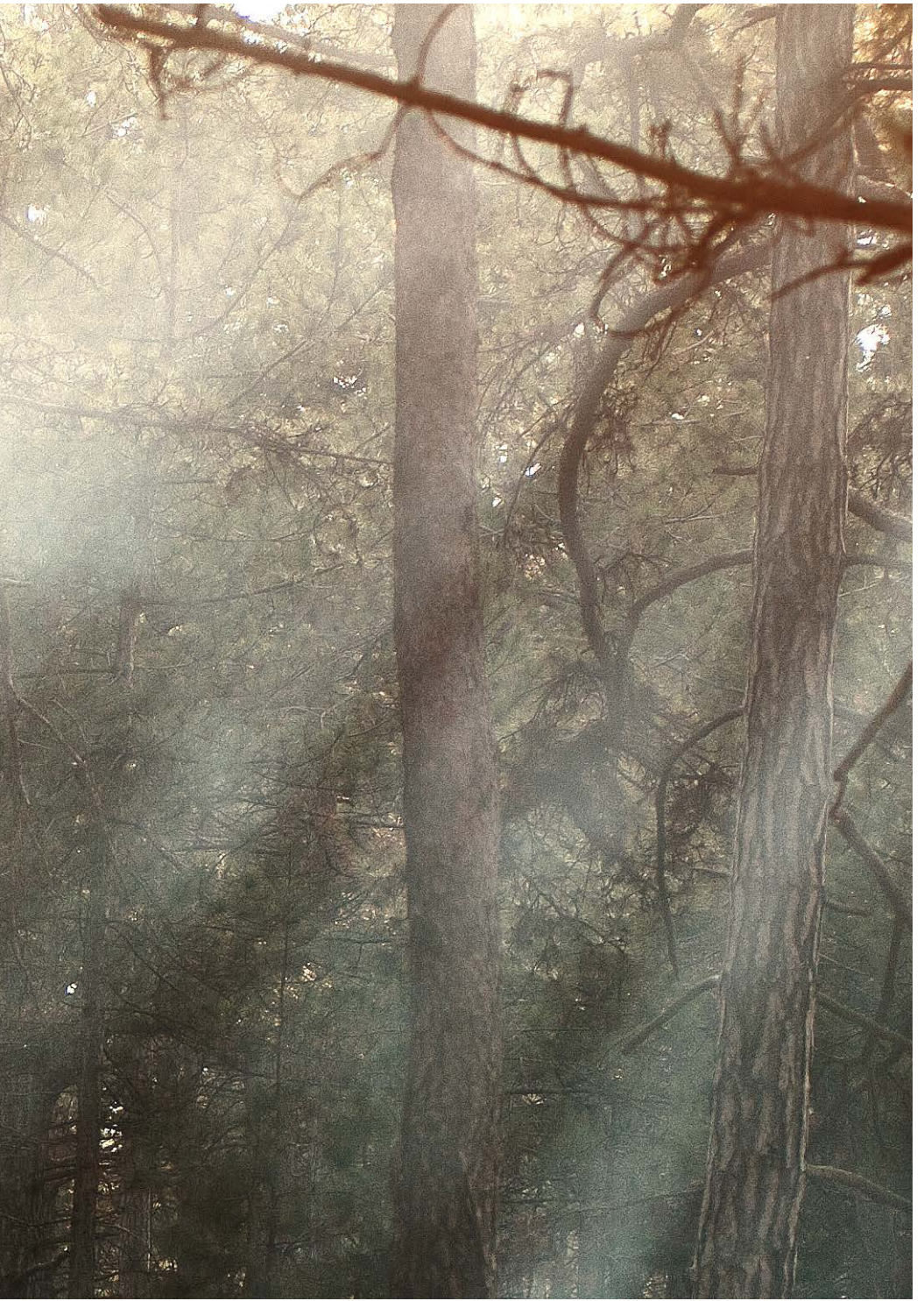




## Journal entry

Write about how you see God, Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit, in relation to the natural world. This could also be a poem, a prayer or an image.







# fully human

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technology our saviour?

## Prayer

*Our hands were empty, and you filled them.*

*ANZPB p.490*

## Opening Prayer

*O God,  
you wonderfully created  
and yet more wonderfully restored  
the dignity of human nature;  
grant that we may share the divine life  
of your Son Jesus Christ,  
who lives and reigns with you  
and the Holy Spirit,  
one God now and for ever. Amen*

*ANZPB p. 557, Collect for Christmas 1*

## Reflection By Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury

“One of the reasons sometimes given for not being too alarmed by predictions of ecological disaster is that we are underrating the possibilities that will be offered by new technologies. Apart from the assumption that we have time to spare in this matter, what is startling is the appeal to ‘technical change’ in these general terms as a messianic resource.

To appeal to a technical future is to say that our most fundamental right as humans is unrestricted consumer choice. In order to defend that, we must mobilise all our resources of skill and ingenuity, diverting resources from other areas so that we can solve problems created by our own addictive behaviours. The question is whether, even if this were clearly possible, it would be a sane or desirable way of envisaging the human future

Religious belief claims, in the first place, that I am most fully myself only in relation with my creator; what I am in virtue of this relationship cannot be diminished or modified by any earthly power. In the natural environment there is a dimension that resists and escapes us; to be aware of that is to grasp the implications of belief in human dignity.”

## Readings and Discussion

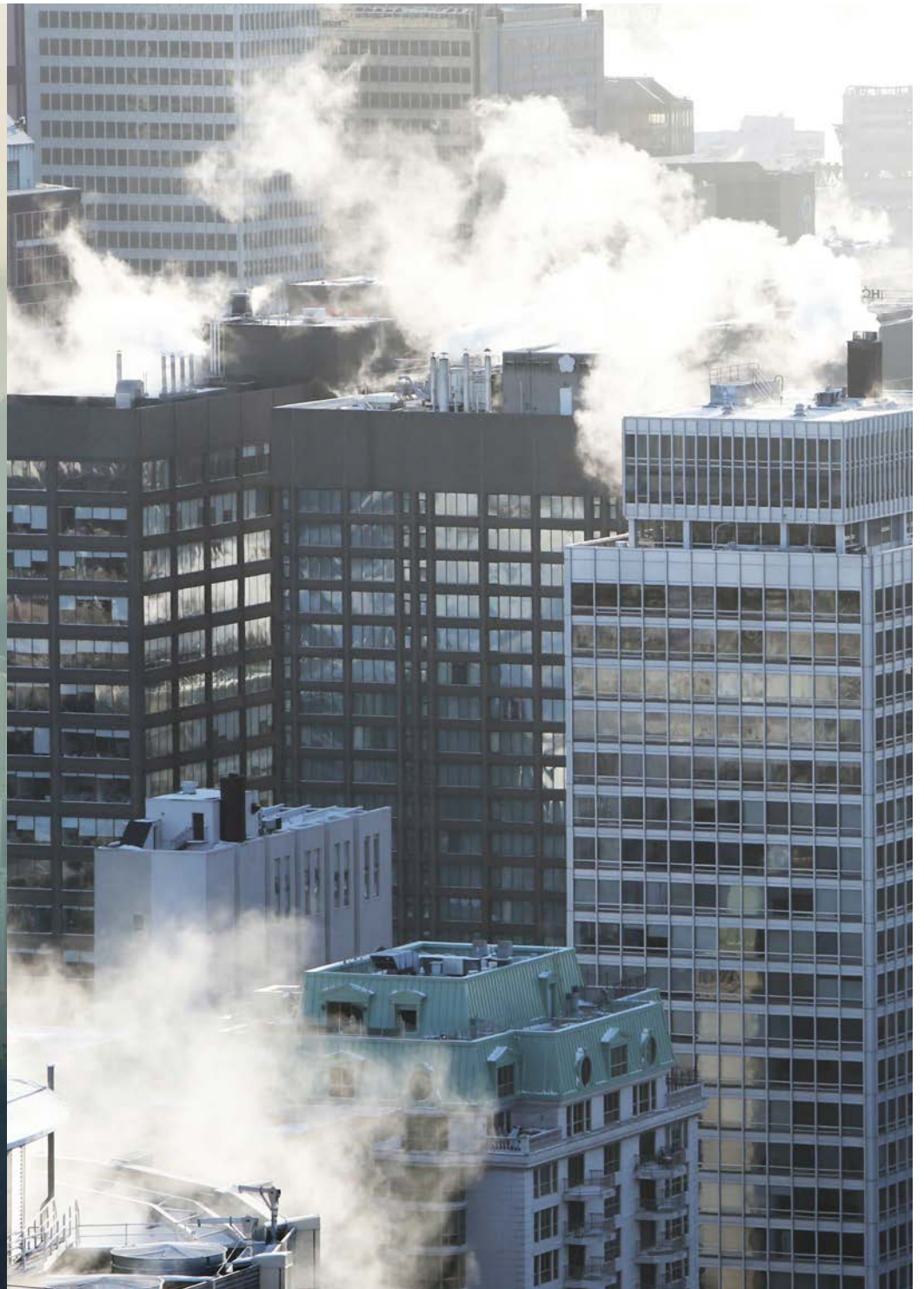
Read Hosea 4:1-3

1. What does Hosea mean by saying that “the land mourns”?
2. How does Hosea see the condition of the land relating to human activity?
3. How should we interpret this today?

Read Isaiah 65: 17-25

1. What is the central idea of Isaiah’s vision?
2. What is God’s role in bringing about this vision, and what place do humans have in it?
3. In light of this, how might we be called to cooperate with God in this creative work?







## Going deeper

1. The Archbishop describes the spiral of poverty and violence typical of many countries in the global South, brought about by colonisation, corporate control, corrupt leadership, and the restructuring demands of the World Bank. What sort of pressures does this put on the environment?

2. Some companies make their profits with no consideration of human rights, workers wages and conditions, or environmental damage.

How can we encourage investors/shareholders to be mindful of these effects on others and on the environment?





## Going deeper

1. Why do you think the Archbishop describes the appeal to reliance on technology as “messianic”?

2. What “addictive behaviours” could the Archbishop be referring to?

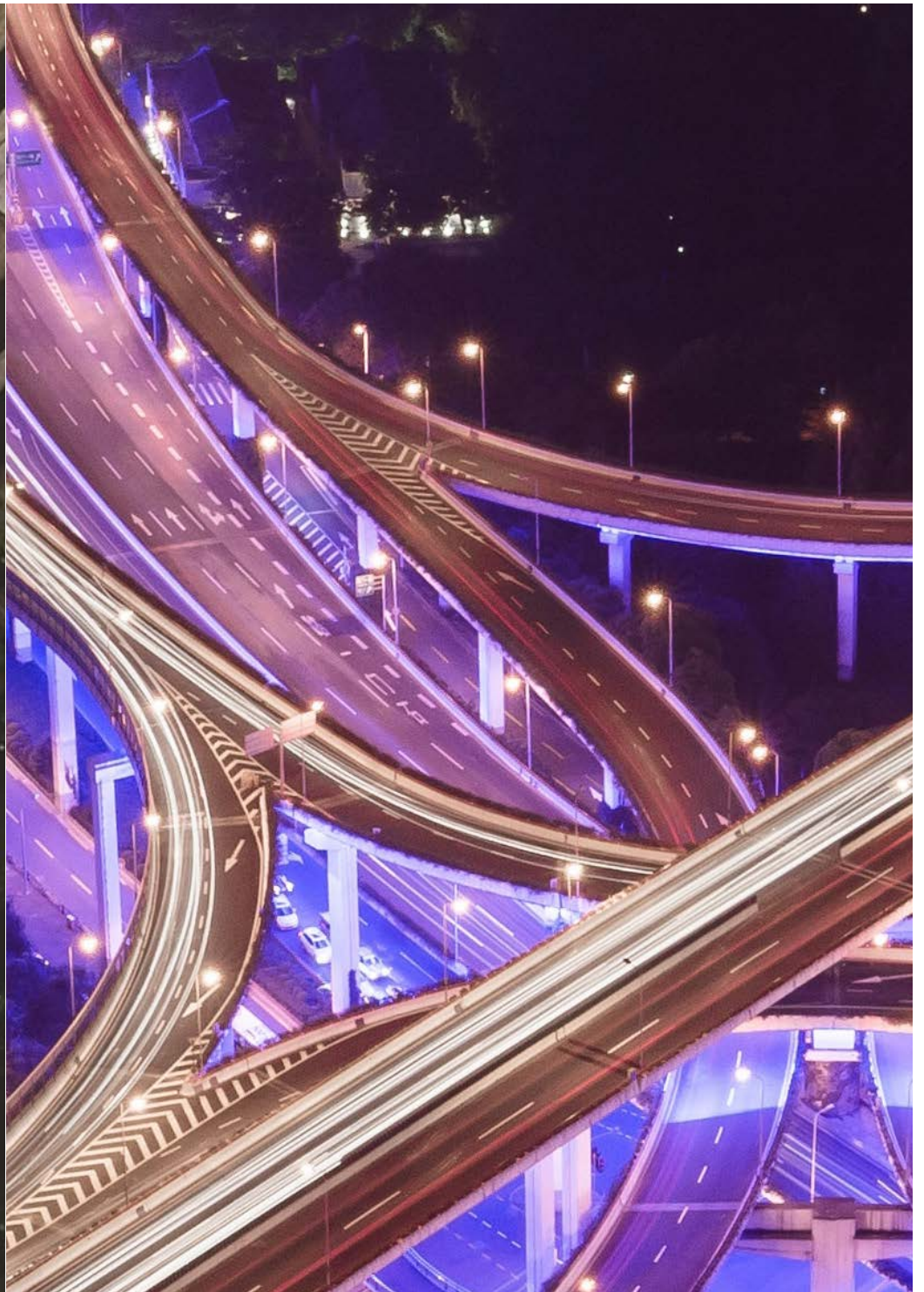
3. Who and what decides how human skills and ingenuity are used and what are the reasons for the decisions?

Apart from pursuing new technology, how else could we use them?

4. People work harder and harder to “increase their standard of living”.

How does this fit with religious beliefs that it is our relationship with our Creator that should be the defining character of humanity?







## Reflection By Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury

“We know a little about the way in which economic ‘rationalisation’ to meet the requirements of the World Bank at the end of the eighties put pressure on Rwanda, contributing to the social rootlessness that leads to militarisation. We are conscious of the poisonous legacy of colonial manipulation of tribal rivalry but we are only slowly recognising the role of population growth, environmental degradation and consequent land shortage in fueling the conflicts that followed.

When we speak about environmental crisis, we are not to think only of spiraling poverty and mortality, but about brutal and uncontrollable conflict. An economics that ignores environmental degradation invites social degradation – in plain terms, violence.

Needless to say, it will be the poorest countries that suffer first and most dramatically, but the ‘developed’ world will not be able to escape: the failure to manage the resources we have has the same consequences wherever we are. In the interim – just as within so much of urban society in wealthier countries – we can imagine ‘fortress’ situations, struggling to keep the growing instability and violence elsewhere at bay and so intensifying its energy.”

## Readings and Discussion

### Read Micah 6:6-8

1. What sort of religious observance is the poet rejecting, and why?
2. How might the way of living that the LORD requires affect the current ecological crisis?

### Read Matthew 6:19-21

1. What does Jesus mean by “treasures in heaven”?
2. How would being obedient to the command “Do not store up for yourselves...” mean acting responsibly in relation to our environment?
3. How does this impact on our “full humanity”?

## Prayer

*God of peace let us your people know  
that at the heart of turbulence  
there is an inner calm that comes  
from faith in you.*

*Keep us from being content with things  
as they are,  
that from this central peace  
there may come a creative compassion,  
a thirst for justice,  
and a willingness to give of ourselves  
in the spirit of Christ.*

*Amen.*

*ANZPB p.464*





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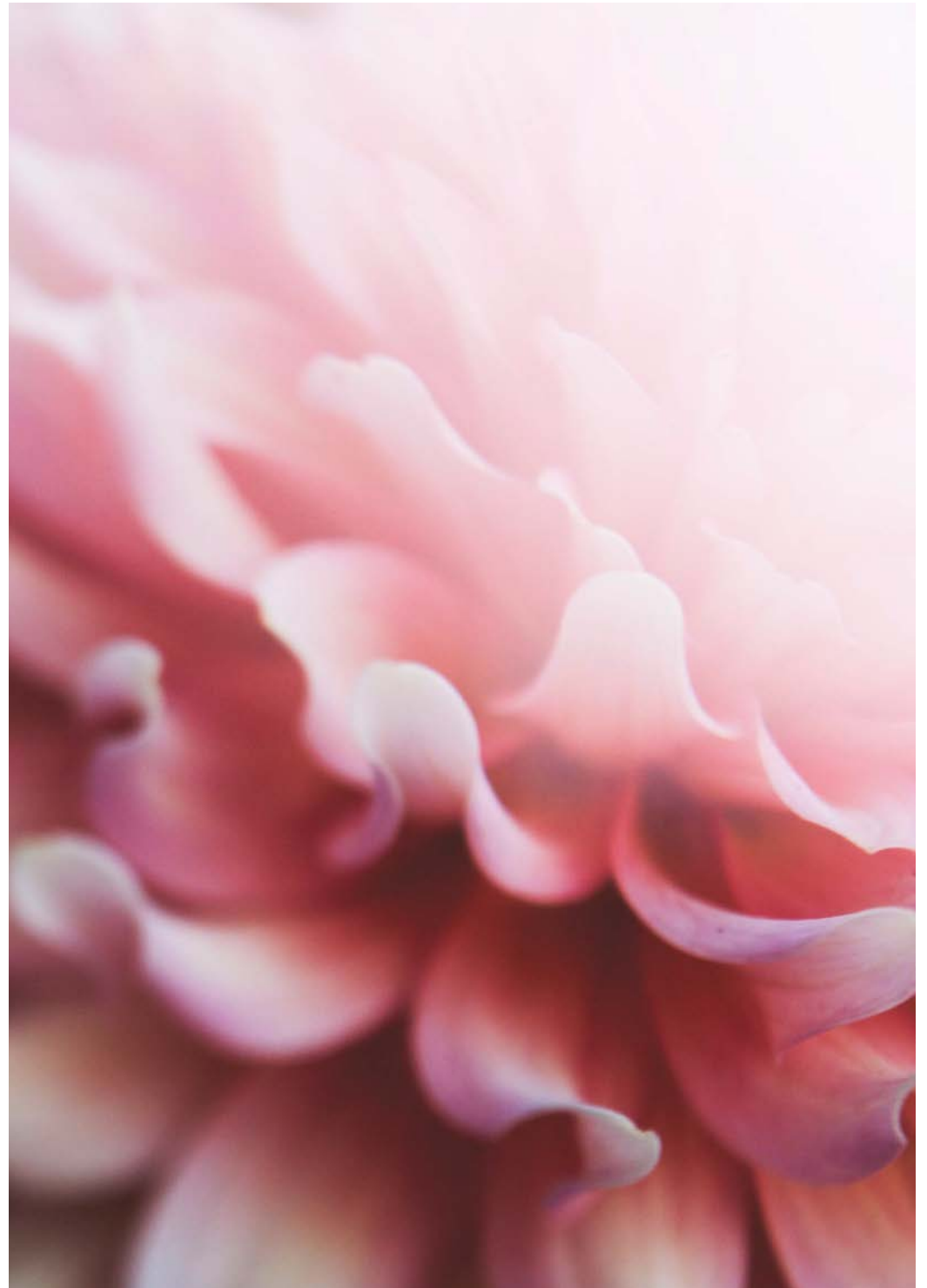
*a healing comes  
and there are seeds of hope;  
here is tomorrow  
germinating in today.*

*Listen to the stories, dreams and thoughts  
of those who have no voice.  
They're wounded for the want of being listened to;  
They cry and too few hear;  
they slowly die and too few mourn.*

*And yet  
through these who give attention,  
who stretch both hands to touch, embrace, receive;  
through these who labour, claim their dignity  
and drink the cup of suffering,  
breath winds of change,  
and earth their dreams in struggle,  
healing comes  
and there are seeds of tomorrow  
germinating in today.*

*Be just - sharing in their truth.  
In finding them,  
you find yourself.*

*Kate Compston - Hampshire*





# all-consuming

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## justice for the earth

### Opening Prayer

*Listen to the water, air and earth;  
creation's treasure store.*

*They're wounded for the want  
of being listened to:*

*They cry and too few hear;  
they slowly die and too few mourn.*

*And yet*

*through those who give attention,  
who stretch both hands  
to touch, embrace and tend;*

*through those who marvel, reverence and kneel  
and cup the water, feel the breath of heaven,  
and hear the humming earth, >>*





## Making it Happen

1. Look up 'Season of creation' liturgy from <http://acen.anglicancommunion.org/resources/season-of-creation.aspx>
2. Have a look at the resources and think about how you may use some of these in your daily life?

## Closing Prayer

*Lord, in these times when we fear we are  
losing hope  
Or feel our efforts are futile,  
Let us see in our hearts and minds the  
image of your resurrection,  
And let that be the source of courage and  
strength.  
With that, and in your company,  
Help us to face challenges and struggles  
Against all that is born of injustice.*

*From the Philippines*

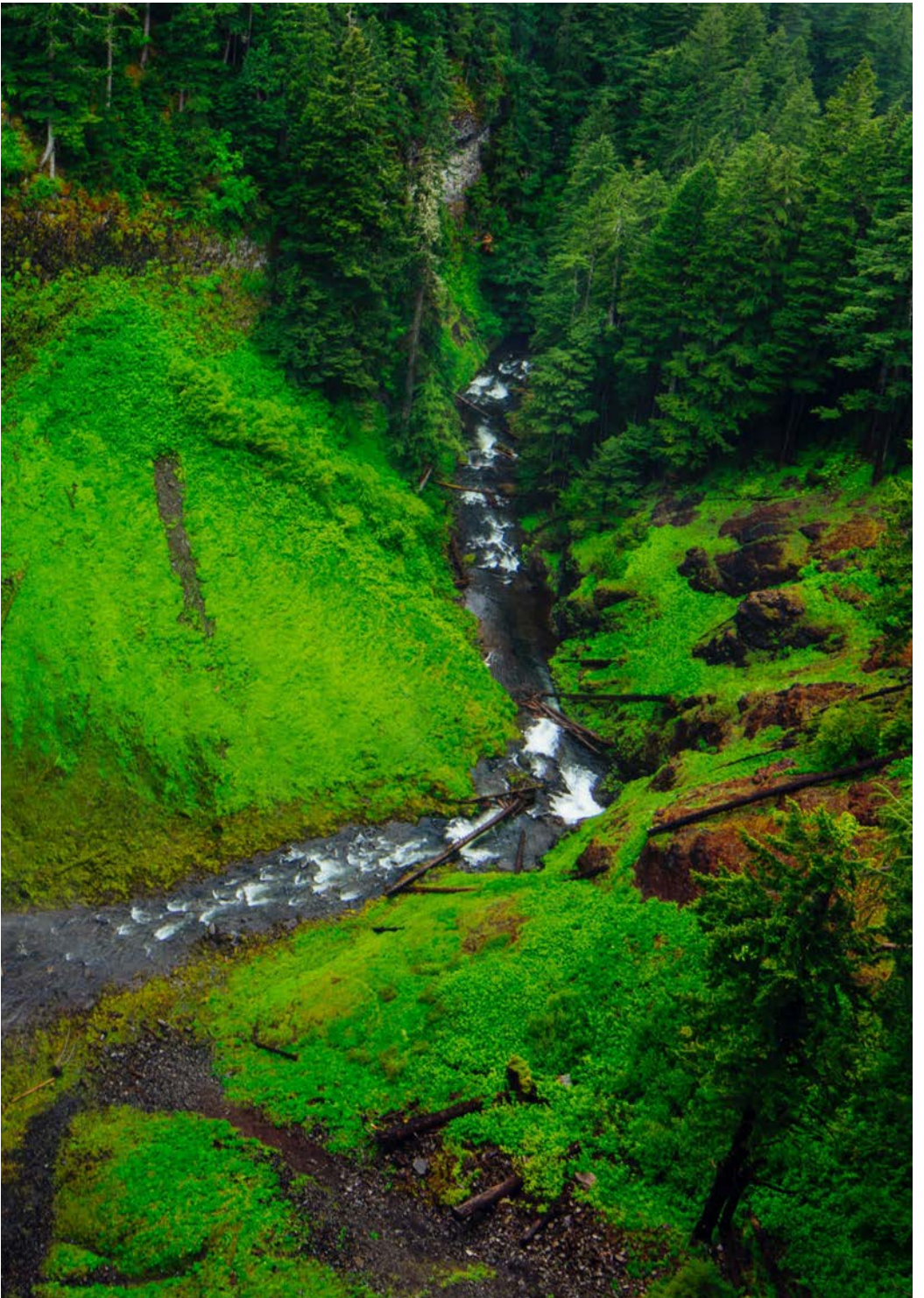
## Journal entry

Engage in some theological reflection on an issue relating to our unfolding climate and ecological crisis. Start with your experience . Explore that experience from a social, economic and political perspective (what is going on?). Reflect on your findings through the lens of our faith tradition and Scripture. Finally, in light of your work, take action that enables a new “experience” (and, if you are super keen, begin the process again).











## Closing Prayer

*God of creation, the earth is yours  
with all its beauty and goodness,  
its rich and overflowing provision.*

*But we have claimed it for our own,  
plundered its beauty for profit,  
grabbed its resources for ourselves.*

*God of creation, forgive us.  
May we no longer abuse your trust,  
but care gently and with justice  
for your earth.*

*Amen.*

*Jan Berry, Sheffield*

## Journal entry

Jesus is our image for what it means to be human and we try to model ourselves on him.

In the coming week try to imagine how Jesus would handle the lifestyle decisions that you face every day and their impact on the environment.



## Making it Happen

1. Find out about a local community garden. Does your parish have any land which could be used for a community garden, to produce food for those in need and to teach the skills and provide the plants for people to develop home gardens?
2. Seriously consider growing and buying organic food. If your congregation contributes to a food bank, look critically at the quality of food you give.
3. Make submissions to your district and regional council to ensure they are fulfilling their responsibilities as guardians of the land and water.





# the jubilee

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## Opening Prayer

*O God our creator,  
whose good earth is entrusted to our care  
and delight and tenderness, we pray:*

*For all who are in captivity to debt, whose lives are  
cramped by fear from which there is no turning  
except through abundant harvest.*

*May those who sow in tears  
reap with shouts of joy.*

*For all who depend on the earth  
for their daily food and fuel whose forests are  
destroyed for the profits of a few.*

*May those who sow in tears  
reap with shouts of joy. >>*

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*For all who labour in poverty,  
who are oppressed by unjust laws,  
who are banned for speaking the truth,  
who long for a harvest of justice.*

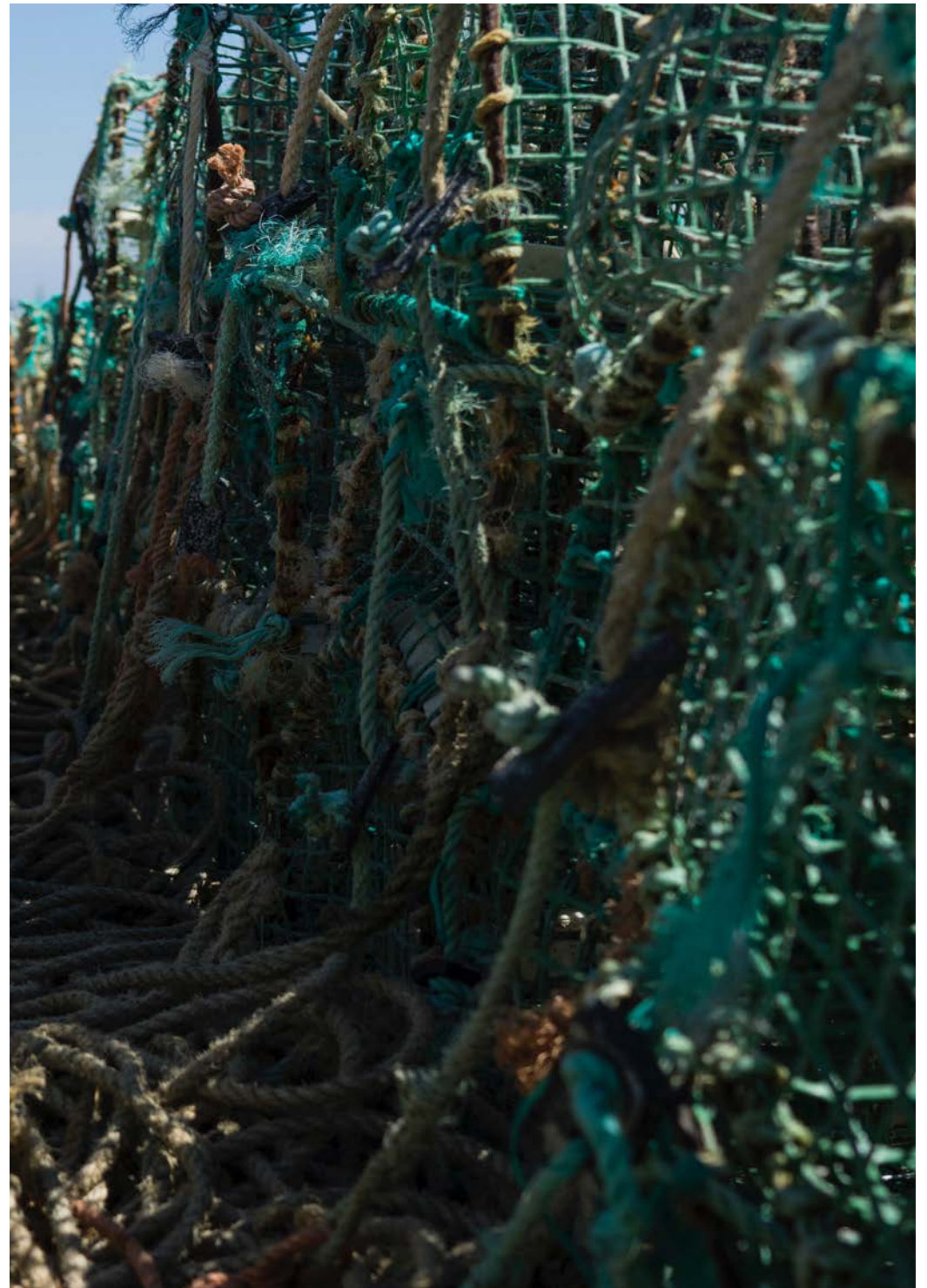
*May those who sow in tears  
reap with shouts of joy.*

*For all who are in captivity  
to greed and waste and boredom,  
whose harvest joy is choked  
with things they do not need.*

*May those who sow in tears  
reap with shouts of joy.*

*Turn us again from our captivity,  
and restore our vision,  
that our mouth may be filled with laughter  
and our tongue with singing.*

*"Till All Creation Sings" - Janet Morley*

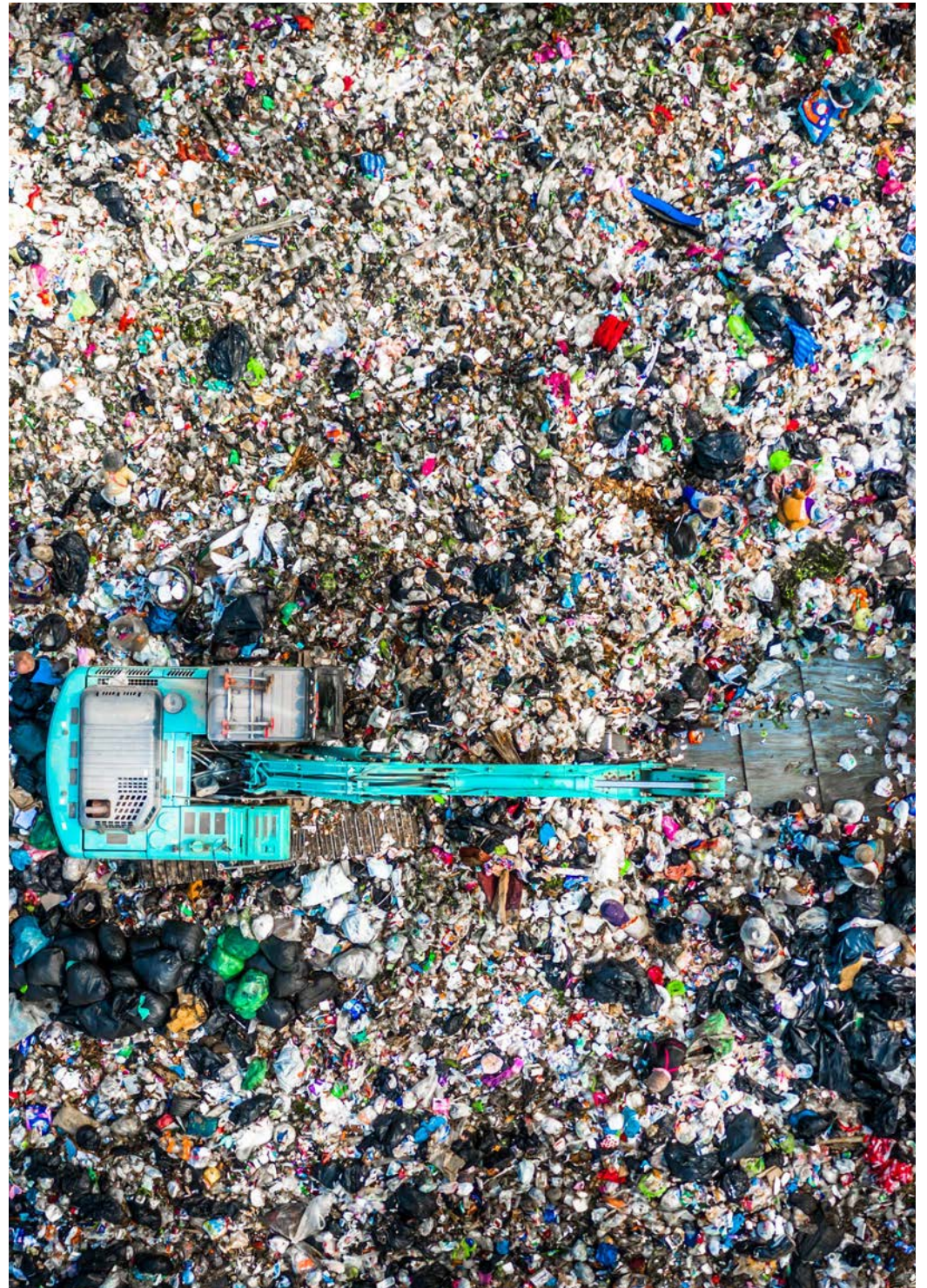




## Prayer

*Awaken in us a sense of wonder  
for the earth and all that is in it.  
Teach us to care creatively for its  
resources.*

*ANZPB p.413*



## Reflection By Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury

“Judaism’s teachings about the ‘jubilee’ principle stress that the land is lent not given to human cultivators: it requires ‘sabbatical’ years, and its value is to be seen not in terms of absolute possession but as a source of a limited number of harvests between the sabbatical years.

The assumption is that the environment that is given, the land bestowed by God, has to be set free regularly from our assumption of ownership; it has to be left to be itself, to be in relation to God who has given it. A year of uncultivation, wildness, is not a lot, but it speaks of our willingness to organise economy around ecology, to ‘keep house’ within the limits of a world where we are guests more than owners.

The jubilee idea has had great currency recently as a focal image for the imperative of debt remission; I believe it has just as much importance in this context – and using it in this context reminds us of the way in which the issues of economic justice and ecological justice belong together.

Perhaps we need another ‘jubilee’, concentrated on sabbaticals for over-fished waters and deforested uplands, recognising that the rapacity and short-term planning that devastate these resources have their roots in the same blindness that, three decades ago, began to press disadvantaged nations into debt and then sought to improve their economies by the profoundly damaging strategies of ‘structural adjustment’, which deplete the human – the civil and cultural – resources of a nation.”

## Going deeper

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages of land ownership to the care of the land?

2. There are differing patterns of land ownership. In Maori kaupapa, as in other cultures, land is held in common, while alternative communities such as eco-villages and communes have collective ownership.

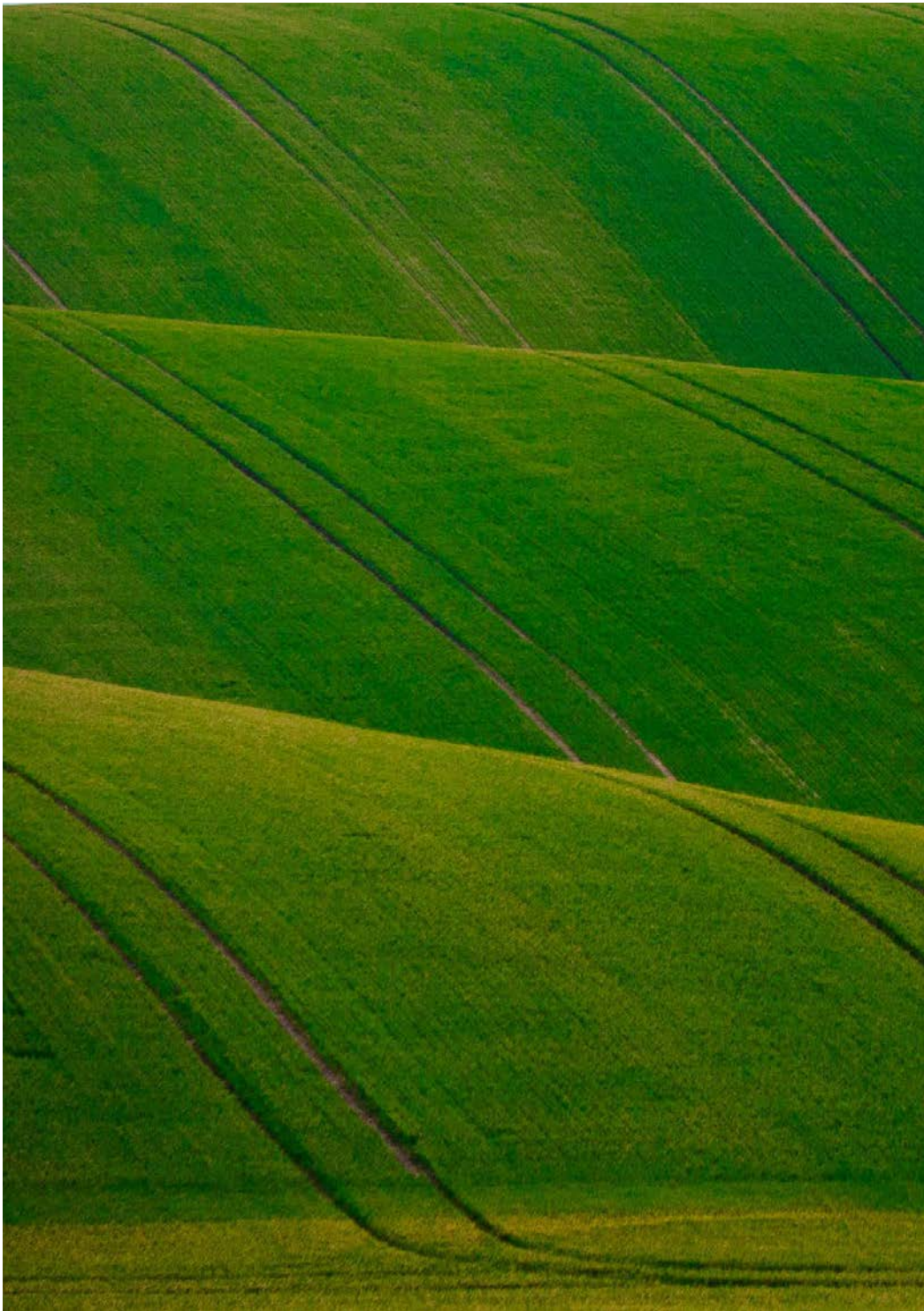
What are the advantages and disadvantages - social and environmental - in this?

3. In the Western economic model the capital value of land and property seems to increase every year, so mortgages grow. As a result farming has to become more intensive to increase production.

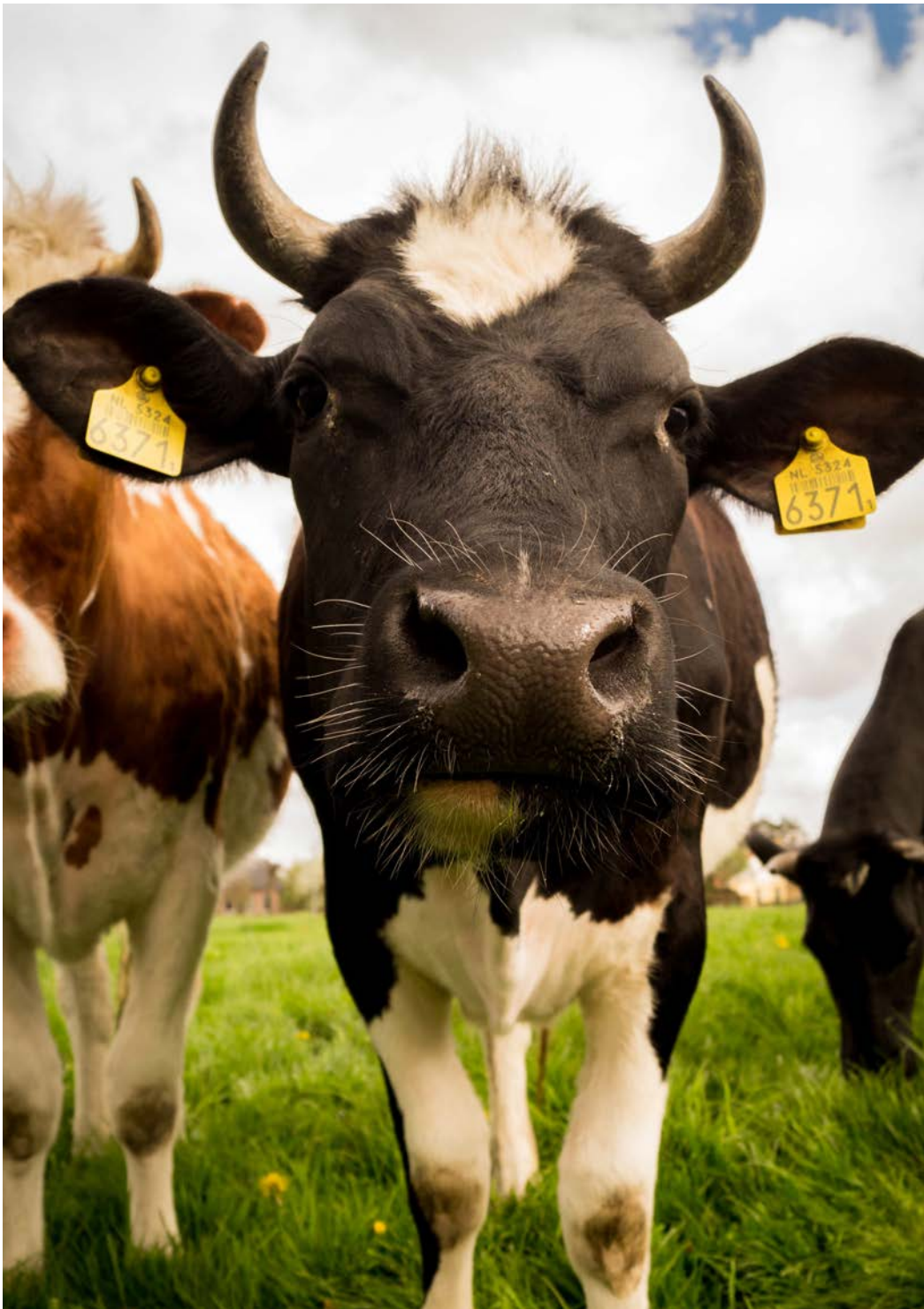
How is this affecting the environment?

5. What do you think of the Archbishop’s suggestion of sabbaticals for over-fished waters and deforested uplands (and commercial farmland)?









## Readings and Discussion

Read Luke 4:16-21

1. What vision does Jesus have for the “year of the Lord’s favour”?
2. How should modern Christians respond to this text?

Read Leviticus 25:1-17

1. Notice the language the text uses. To whom does “the land” belong?
2. In light of this, how was Israel supposed to relate to the land?
3. How might observing the jubilee have benefited the land?
4. Equally, how might the jubilee have benefited the society that depended on the land?
5. How can we take the jubilee principle seriously in the world we live in today?