

'All good gifts around us are sent from heaven above' - Reflection for Harvest 10.10.21

'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? 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? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? 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 will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will 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 6:25-36

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Our harvest celebrations take place in the context of many challenges. We are living in a time of pandemic. Food and energy prices are rising. Friends in Surrey report that they still cannot get petrol. Meanwhile the media spotlight on preparations for COP26 in Glasgow ensures that the climate emergency is never far from our thoughts. It would be understandable to feel worried as we wonder what this winter will bring.

Our Gospel reading urges us not to worry about our lives, rather to fix our eyes on the Kingdom of God. It's a hard lesson because all of us worry about our lives at some point or other – that's only human. Yet Jesus seems to be suggesting that we mustn't let worry dominate our thoughts, rather our commitment to God and God's kingdom. In the Kingdom of God all will be fed and all will be clothed. There will be no climate emergency and we will once again live in harmony with one another and with the whole of Creation.

Harvest is a time to thank and to pray for all those who grow our food, who transport it and who work in our shops and markets. Our renewed understanding of our responsibility towards God's Creation perhaps leads to a fresh appreciation of those who work the land and produce our food, not only in this country but around the world. It also gives us a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of people and planet. As we contribute our harvest gifts to the work of the Family Haven here in Gloucester, we acknowledge that we are connected one to another. We acknowledge too our role in working with God as partners in the business of bringing in God's Kingdom of justice and peace.

May we always live as those who share with friend and stranger, giving generously to others, with thankful hearts for all God's gifts around us.

Rev Canon Nikki Arthy, Rector