

Genesis 1—2:2  
 This Fragile Earth our Island Home  
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Good Morning.

Do you feel as if we are careening through space, on the verge of being completely out of control? Do you worry about our country? Do you fear for our collective souls?

We have this weekend, and have had for the past week and a half, record protests in our country. Individuals gathering, decrying the marginalization of people of color in our country, and a seemingly systemic application of inappropriate and disproportionate use of force by police against men, women and children with black and brown skin. Cell phone videos from across our country reveal what some have long known.

And I know there are people, family members, members of our diocese, friends who hold very different perspectives from my own.

The chasms in our country are deep, this time is fraught and the virus continues.

In the midst of it I do confess that despair does seep through my skin and pierce my hope. And then I pray. I read. I remember that:

“In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void... (Gen 1:1-2)

I remember that:

“Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our own image, according to our likeness, and ...God Created humankind in his image, in the image of God, he [God] created them, male and female [God] he created them.” (Gen 1:26-27)

I remember. I remember who I am, whose I am. Who we are. Whose we are.

“At your command all things came to be: the vast expanse of interstellar space, galaxies, suns, the planets in their courses, and this fragile earth, our island home. By your will they were created and have their being.” (BCP p 370)

Could it be, dear friends, that this is, that this is a moment in time, a moment of crisis and virus, to remember the story of our beginning? A story that has no need to be fact or exact or the unassailable, incontrovertible Word of God, for it to be true and relevant, and dripping with God’s Holy Love.

Most biblical scholars believe that significant portions of the Book of Genesis were written during the period in time when the Israelites were in exile. They, the chosen

people, God's Holy ones, had been taken over, held hostage by an oppressive foreign government. They were banished from their land, cast out from all that they knew. As they tried to make sense of their world, their circumstances, and situation, they began to write down the ancient, oral stories that had sustained them for so many years.

“In the Beginning, when God created, the Heavens and the Earth... the earth was a formless void. The earth was a formless void while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters...”

In a time of desperate trial the priests of their time penned the story of their beginning, not so much to explain how the universe came to be, but rather as Biblical theologian Miguel De La Torre says,

“Providing hope to these despairing refugees. The message that ...their God is indeed the almighty...the God of Life...these two opening lines [of scripture] remind them and us today that our God is hovering over us, ready to begin a new work.” (Genesis: Belief a Theological Commentary on the Bible, p 13, 2011).

Just as the Israelites in the exile needed reminding, so too do we that our God is the God of life, the God of new life, the God always of Hope.

De La Torre continues, “these words also challenge us...Out of the deep watery chaos comes order and harmony.” (p 13.) God creates order out of chaos. And we made in God's image and likeness, “We too are called to create.” (p. 13). We the people, ALL the People, all the people of good will and faith are called to create now something new.

To do this we need remember that we are God's and we are lost without each other.

May we relinquish our heavy burdens of despair and begin to act, take steps, make plans to alter the course of our country, but may our action also be prayer. By this I mean, remembering always that our creator God, hovers over us all. As we act, when someone speaks and says something we do not agree with, something we do not want to hear, let us then STOP, listen, love, learn, change and ACT again. We act, we stop and listen, love, learn, change and Act. We act. We stop and listen. We love and learn. We change and we act again.

And so we do, and so we can, so that all people of God may renew the face of the earth.