

Just Scripture: Lent and Easter

Groaning with creation



Lope and Eva, like many others on their remote island of the Philippines, depend on fishing. A thriving ecosystem is essential for their livelihood. But climate change is making this increasingly difficult.

Rise up this Lent

'I appeal to richer nations to stop activities which are destroying the environment and violating the human rights of the poorer nations. It's us, on this island, who are suffering.' Eva

Opening prayer

(First person lights a candle, saying)
I will light a light,
in the name of the Maker
who lit the world
and breathed the breath of life for me.

(Second person lights a candle, saying)
I will light a light,
in the name of the Son
who saved the world
and stretched out his hand to me.

(Third person lights a candle, saying)
I will light a light,
in the name of the Spirit
who encompasses the world
and blesses my soul with yearning.

(All)
We light three lights,
for the Trinity of Love:
God above us,
God beside us,
God beneath us,
the beginning, the end,
the everlasting one.
Amen.

(From 'A Wee Worship Book', John L Bell and Graham Maule.)

Alternative opening prayer

God of justice,
we come to your Word
with open minds and hungry hearts,
eager to learn from you
and each other,
so we might live our lives
more in step with your will
to love mercy, act justly and walk
humbly with you, now and always.
In Jesus' name,
Amen.

Introduction

For Lent this year, Christian Aid is journeying with a fishing community who live on the small island of Tabugon in the Philippines. They are living at the sharp end of climate change.

Having survived and rebuilt their lives after Typhoon Haiyan hit in 2013, the community is working out how to live with the ever-present threat of climate change. Fishing is their only real means of income but that has become increasingly dangerous due to the storms. Added to this, fish stocks are being depleted due to destructive illegal fishing.

This community, led by fisherfolk Lope and Eva and helped by Christian Aid partner ICODE, have stepped up to respond to these challenges and in the process are demonstrating a deep respect and care for creation.

Lope and his team patrol the seas and have set up a house to guard against illegal fishing. The community have set down hundreds of concrete jackstones, forming an artificial reef to nurture marine life, and they have been replanting sturdy mangrove trees. Mangrove trees help protect against storm surges and improve the land and sea environment. Mangroves capture carbon in the ground and store three times more carbon than the rainforest!

Reflecting on the experience of Lope and Eva, when or where do you feel most affected by or connected to creation?

The passage: Romans 8:18-25

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Closing prayer

Giver of life,
in our plundered world
with poisoned waters
and polluted air
we groan with creation.

In a world of plastic waste
with stripped soil
and growing deserts
we groan with creation.

In a world of chaotic weather
with drought and floods
and raging fires
we groan with creation.

And may these groans
be the labour pains
of another possible world
coming into view
that we take our place
in bringing to bear.
In your glorious name we pray,
Amen!



Eva plants mangroves to protect her island from storms during typhoon season.