



Harvest Thanksgiving

For my parents' generation who grew up after the war, the great virtue was "waste not, want not." Life was one big salvage operation, and I remember we had a Jacob's biscuit tin on the mantelpiece where all sorts of bits and pieces were stored like buttons and safety pins and zips and pieces of string. It was holdall in which was stored the wherewithal to repair the wear and tear of daily life. Hoarding then was a virtue rather than a vice.

Clothes were patched and woollen socks were darned out of recognition and when vests and nether garments gave up the ghost they began life anew as dusters and mops. Clothes were hand me downs, and sizes seemed to be approximate rather than exact, and hems altered between being let down or turned up.

And then, after all this thrift and economising we were plunged into the consumer society and the era of the disposable. Just when a pair of shoes has finally begun to accept our bunions they are usually discarded. Governments and businesses have vied with each other in promoting avarice in their citizens, because the economy depends on it.

Although, it would seem now that after all the spending the economies of the world are in meltdown. And am I wrong in thinking that in all these freakish weather events in our own land and across the world, God is giving us all a wake up call saying to all of us, this cannot go on indefinitely.

The human race has largely forgotten that in the beginning we were called by God to be stewards and caretakers and to look after the earth. But then, the world has largely forgotten that we are all children of God and people have exchanged their divine birth right for worldly power and riches instead.

The word Eucharist means thanksgiving and in this act of worship which we call both the Mass and the Eucharist, we give thanks to God for absolutely everything we have, for our families and friends; for my food, and for the fact that when I turn the tap on I know that clean water will come gushing out. But above all, we give thanks for our Blessed Lord Jesus Christ and for the fact that he died for us all and rose again.

In bread and wine we give thanks to God for absolutely everything we have and all that Christ has done for us. And so, in two very simple gifts of bread and wine, we offer our lives and our thanks on the Altar of God at the start of each new week. But because God is gracious and all loving, he doesn't just take the offering of our thanks, he receives our thanks and then gives himself back to us in Holy Communion to strengthen our hearts and lives in holiness and service for the coming week.

And that is why we set aside this day each year to say thank you to God for the food we eat and for the harvest of the land. Maybe today of all days we need to be reminded that we are God's stewards and caretakers, and everything we have including our daily bread is given to us on trust and we have a duty of care towards our fellow human beings, the world over, who are not as blessed as we are in this country.

So let us give thanks today for Gods provision of our needs for the fact that we can turn on a tap and get as much water as we want when some do not. Let us be truly a Eucharistic community, a community which gives thanks to God and doesn't just take as though it's ours by right. If we are a community which constantly gives thanks, then maybe, just maybe we will help to bring this heavy world which is always grasping and taking to its senses.

