

World Environment Day, Pentecost Sunday and the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth's reign

This year June 5 hosts a crowd of celebrations. In most Western Churches it is the feast of Pentecost Sunday. In Great Britain and nations with a British heritage it marks the platinum jubilee of the 1952 coronation of Queen Elizabeth. On an even broader canvas it is World Environment Day. Each celebration offers rich material for reflection

The theme of World Environment Day, *Only One Earth*, is haunting. It also picks out central features of the other celebrations. The insistence that there is only one earth emphasises the catastrophe that faces our grandchildren if we do not care for the earth. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has described starkly the importance of immediate and concerted action. Technological advances have helped slow down the pace of global warming but will not be enough without urgent change. That is why care for the environment is part of our mission and all our processes at Jesuit Social Services.

The emphasis on only one earth also exposes the selfishness and foolishness of people who, having polluted the earth, meditate occupying other planets. It invites us to act as One People, setting aside differences and individual interests in order to work together to preserve and develop the earth. By looking to the common good we can make a world hospitable to human beings and to the variety of beings with which we share it. Only One Earth suggests also that Only One Time is given to us to protect the earth – the present time when we enjoy and enjoy its hospitality.

An appropriate theme for the anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's coronation might well have been Only One Nation, not in the exclusive and discriminatory claim sometimes made by these words, but to describe her representation of all the people of her nation in their diversity of race, wealth, religion, political and ethical convictions. Anyone who has followed her daily program of meeting, greeting, listening to and making speeches and moving on the next engagement can only admire the way in which she is present to each person she meets. In her self-sacrificing attention to duty to her nation she embodies the inclusive and focused commitment to the good of the earth that is required if we are to hand it on unspoiled to our grandchildren. Whatever our origins, our nationality or our religion, she merits recognition for a devoted life.

Finally, Pentecost Sunday reminds us that there is only One Spirit who breathed over the world in blessing its creation, who spoke through the prophets of Israel, who came down on the Apostles at Pentecost, who makes Christ present to the Church today, and who is the source of all good initiatives to make a just and sustainable world today. Pentecost, like One Earth Day and the Queen's service to the nation, emphasises the need to look to the good of all people and of all the beings that compose our environment. We are all one in the Spirit.