

My name is Mark Bartosic, I'm an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Chicago and the Episcopal Vicar of Vicariate II. Welcome to this celebration of solemn vespers, marking the 30th anniversary of the World Day of Prayer for the Care for Creation. This holy day was established by Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios on September 1, 1989. We regret that Metropolitan Nathaniel is not able to participate in this year's service, and we join our prayer tonight to his and to the prayer of all who care about the work of the Creator. I'd like to welcome Fr. Richard Demetrius Andrews, Fr. Panagiotis Boznos, George Nassos, and the people of Ss. Peter and Paul Greek Orthodox Church to this special evening; I'm glad that we can join to pray together tonight, and I'm looking forward to listening with you to the reflections of Rev. Dr. Deacon Perry Hamalis on Ecology, Theology, and Human Dignity. I'd like to thank Fr. Jerry Boland and his staff, as well as the people of Our Lady of Perpetual Help for hosting us in your beautiful church. Welcome to all of you, and thank you being here.

This evening I will ask you to indulge my interest in the 19th-century poet, Gerard Manley Hopkins.

Glory be to God for dappled things –
For skies of couple-colour as a brindled cow;
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;
Landscape plotted and pieced – fold, fallow, and plough;
And áll trádes, their gear and tackle and trim.

All things counter, original, spare, strange;
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
Praise him.

Gerard Manley Hopkins' poetic voice is utterly original, and he wanted it that way. While a student at Oxford, he came across the work of John Duns Scotus, one of the most important philosopher-theologians of the Middle Ages, and a spiritual son of St. Francis of Assisi. St. Francis' poetry inspired Pope Francis in the writing of his encyclical on the environment, *Laudato Si*. Duns Scotus coined the term haecceity, *thisness*, to designate the utter uniqueness of every created thing. The 13th century philosopher-theologian, and the 19th century poet after him, reveled in the creative power of God that produces such manifold, rare and wonderful works.

Hopkins lived at a time when haecceity, this utter uniqueness, was threatened by something relatively new: the industrial revolution - born in England, and exported from England around the world. The industrialized world exerts tremendous pressure on the diversity that is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. I remember seeing pictures in my school books illustrating the decimation of the population of light-winged moths in England, as industrialization painted the boles of English trees with soot. Suddenly light-winged moths had no place to hide from predators, and black-winged moths found themselves with an evolutionary advantage.

Wherever he looked, Hopkins saw beauty in retreat from ugliness and materialism. And it was not just the environment and fauna that were affected: The English people left their farms *en masse* for the industrializing cities. They found factory work, churning out a proliferation of mass-produced goods with no individuality, no haecceity. As workers they were expendable: by and large, industry needed large numbers of people, but the work was organized in such a way that but little skill or creativity was required of the majority of the people that made it go.

Hopkins' poetry laments the homogenization of industrialized culture, as stunting of the persons who worked in it, and who lived by its values. In

the wake of industrialization, Hopkins' poetry cries out: working people of the eighteenth and 19th centuries were being robbed of their selfhood.

Hopkins would probably believe that the same thievery is being wreaked upon us, today, under pressure exerted by those who design social media platforms, for example, and those who design what we see on television, online, in print, and at the movies. Who among us hasn't coveted the goods of someone hired precisely because of his or her ability to inspire envy? The downside of our phenomenal ability to communicate is the pernicious contagion of desire to be like somebody else.

As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame;
As tumbled over rim in roundy wells
Stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each hung bell's
Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name;
Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:
Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;
Selves — goes itself; myself it speaks and spells,
Crying What I dó is me: for that I came.

I say móre: the just man justices;
Keeps grace: thát keeps all his goings graces;
Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is —
Chríst — for Christ plays in ten thousand places,
Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his
To the Father through the features of men's faces.

His veneration of haecceity makes Hopkins a worthy prophet of the World day of Prayer for the Care for Creation, over a hundred years before the promulgation of the holy day. The Gospel we preach along with Hopkins tells us that God so loved the world...so loved the world...so loved the world...that he gave his only Son; that the world...the world...the world... might be saved through him. In becoming our brother, Jesus bestows a

dignity upon us that calls us to follow, and empowers us to labor with him in his saving work.

Jesus the Word invites us to contemplate what the Father has done; to lose our self in the awe and gratitude that come from seeing in their true nature the simplest, the most commonplace things: a leaf, a raindrop, the movement of cloud or water, the miracle of light at morning or evening. Nowhere is this more true than in the *thisness* of each precious human person, created and redeemed by the Word:

Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his, Christ plays
To the Father through the features of men's faces

In acting together as brothers and sisters to shepherd the cosmos and the people entrusted with its care, we grow in love of the beauty and the naked individuality, the haecceity of each thing that God's hand has wrought...and...we grow in love of Holy Wisdom herself.

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.

It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;

It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil

Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?

Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;

And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;

And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil

Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;

There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;

And though the last lights off the black West went

Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs —

Because the Holy Ghost over the bent

World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.