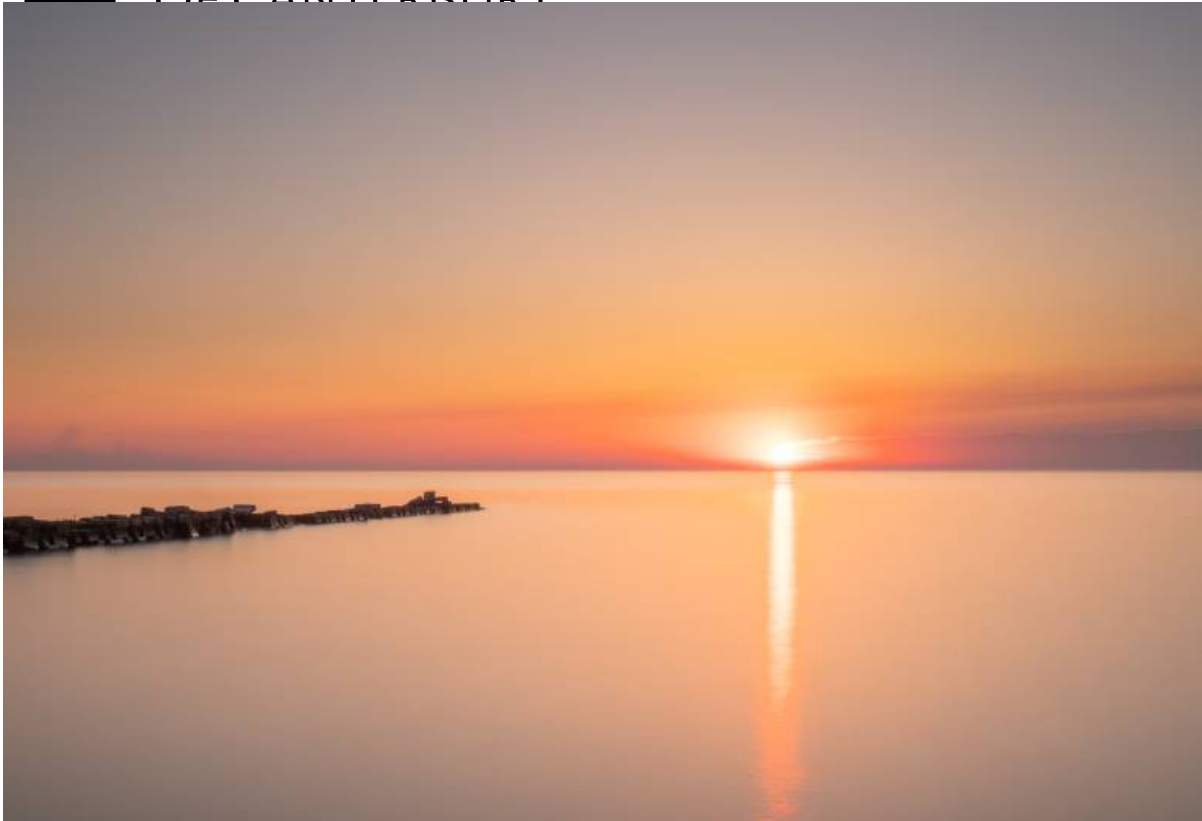




THE ARCHBISHOP
OF CANTERBURY



4 this morning.

On Monday Pope Francis spoke powerfully of the bashfulness of poverty. A few weeks back I was in a nearby hospital as a Chaplain meeting some of the lowest paid, the most invisible. Invisible, yet indispensable. Their worth and necessity not measured in pounds - although it should be - but in love.

It was a meeting in which I found great blessing. As often during lockdown it was a glimpse of interdependence. We've seen it in the kindness of one neighbour to another, the service of our key workers, and the care of people for those they may not even know. We've been given inklings, reminders, of the God-given value and calling of every single person.

The first move for a hoped-for future must be a change of direction to make that glimpse a reality. Christians call it "repentance" meaning "to reverse direction". Repentance can't come without justice, because changing direction means actively righting wrong.

The second move accompanying repentance with justice is forgiveness. Facing the challenge of our interdependence asks us: what does it mean to be truly in relationship with each other? It requires us to recognise the dignity and value of every person, *especially* those that we too readily overlook, those hidden by the bashfulness of suffering - the old, the poor, those with disabilities, and minority communities of all kinds.

Relationships require the hard graft of saying sorry and changing, repenting where we have hurt others, of seeking strength to forgive where we ourselves have been hurt, and committing to work together across welcomed difference. Right relationships in our households and our neighbourhoods, across our cities and our regions, and around our nation and the world require new hearts, what the Pope called conversion. Repentance and forgiveness convert us and offer a future of hope.

This new future requires of us the ability to receive as gift, with wonder and gratitude, the gift of each other with our differences, the gift of creation, supremely the gift of God. Those are the gifts with which to rethink, to rebuild the future. Repentance, forgiving, conversion of heart and of morals, gifts given and received of love: these are the greatest tools to build the greatest hope for the greatest future.

2 min read

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