

November 28th

Genesis 8:1-19

Robert A. Bryant

This text's opening declaration that *God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and all the domestic animals* is the turning point of the entire flood story. It is among the most hopeful words of scripture. After God's heartbroken lament over a rebellious humanity that abandoned God's call to serve and preserve creation (Gen 2:15; 6:5-6), and after God's terrible judgment upon sin with a flood (7:6-24), God remembers. God's mercy triumphs over sin and judgment.

To say that God "remembered" does not mean that God had forgotten. In the Bible, God's remembering is an expression of God's identity and conduct as the Lord of creation who establishes life and keeps covenants. God desires that life flourish upon the earth (Gen 1:28; 8:17). Now that the world is cleansed of sin and recreated, a new beginning is at hand with Noah as a new Adam able to care for all living things and their habitats and with an earth ready for life of every kind to flourish.

This text reminds us that the earth is not our domain; it is the Lord's (cf. Ps 24:1). It also reminds us that God's judgment occurs in the realm of God's mercy. In mercy, God does not abandon humans to themselves. In mercy, God provides fellowship with God and our fellow creatures, "with birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth" (v. 17), with all the "families" of every living thing (v. 19).

Prayer: Dear Lord, in this Advent season of hope, enable us to hear your word to care for your world and all that is in it, so that we—like Noah and his family—may reach out our hands to all the families of your earth, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Action: Bless a human and non-human neighbor today with a tangible act of care.