

Life for Each

The title of this *Sofia* is *Life for Each* – abundant life. This requires, first, that we should own our own life, not be owned by anyone else in any kind of slavery. But ownership of ourselves and our individual body is not enough for abundant life; we also need to belong to a fair and kind society, a body politic, and belong on terms of equal rights and dignity. These are ideal conditions which many individual lives lack and many societies fall short of.

Same Root

Earth is congenial to us
because we are all akin.
Indigenous, we belong.
Once seen as a goddess,
the great mother,
she is not beyond,
but a modest planet,
mortal like us,
a natural body,
here and now.

Pregnant, she generates
her own kind of life,
which, being gendered,
jigs, jives with possibility,
evolves over millennia,
emerges in us
with language in our genes,
but kindred spirits still
with a generic likeness
to her whole geo-economy.

The genitive is mutual:
we are hers and she is ours.
Her kind gift, her generosity,
is life: gentle, savage,
jaunty and precarious.
And ours is to voice it back
unceasingly in talk,
song, every genre,
and the answering upsurge
of poetic genius.

Dinah Livingstone

Articles in this issue address the title ‘Life for Each’ from different perspectives. Stephen Mitchell writes on ‘Death and Resurrection’. Frank Regan, former editor of *Renew*, the magazine of Catholics for a Changing Church, writes about ‘Our Wounded Body Politic’. Francis McDonagh, retired Andes Programme manager for CAFOD, writes on ‘Religion and Politics in Latin America’, from the fifteenth century conquistadors to date. David Rhodes writes on ‘The Idea of “Race” and its Origin in Slavery’. And Ian Harris discusses the possibility of ‘An Eco-Human Future’, since life on Earth involves more than just human life.

John Pearson says goodbye to his *As I Please* column, in which he has been musing upon his own life and life in general. Most of these pieces have now been collected in book form, published by SOF this year (available online, see details sofn.org.uk/shop/shop.html).

This *Sofia*’s front cover shows an ash tree. The giant ash tree Ygdrasil was the Nordic world tree, the tree of life. The tree of life beside the river running through the beautiful city at the end of the book of *Revelation* has *twelve* kinds of fruit; there are all different kinds of life, and the back cover shows a banner illustrating the indigenous Mexican Zapatista double motto: ‘Another World is Possible – For a World with Room for Every World’. Abundant life also means a multitude of life styles, cultures and languages.

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Please do write and send in articles you think would be of interest to *Sofia* readers for future issues. The magazine particularly needs more women writers.

If you receive your copy of this March issue in time (depending on the post), this is a reminder of the SOF Day meeting on March 4th 2023, at Essex Church (Kensington Unitarians), 112 Palace Gardens Terrace, Notting Hill, London W8 4RT. There is a £10 charge .

Please pay in advance if possible. Send your name and a cheque payable to Sea of Faith or SOF to: John Pearson, 3, Belle Grove Place, Spital Tongues, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 4LH. Or pay £10 online at: sofn.org.uk/shop/shop.html. Please state the reference March 23. If you pay online, please also email johnsdpearson@gmail.com with your name for him to acknowledge your booking.