

Bishop of Peterborough writes

My dear friends

As a boy I was taught that 21 March was The First Day of Spring, a day to be noted and celebrated. Nobody told me why spring began then, and until I got into amateur astronomy in my teens that remained a mystery. When I learnt about the Spring Equinox, that 21 March was the day when sunrise and sunset were 12 hours apart, the hinge between winter and summer, it began to make sense.



Of course that day wasn't and isn't the first day of spring by any sensible reckoning; these days the Met Office defines spring as the months of March, April and May, which makes good sense. But 21 March has, since the earliest days of humans looking at the sky and thinking about the seasons, been a significant date in the calendar.

Sadly, with industrialisation, the mass movement into towns and cities, and the proliferation of light pollution at night, most of us have stopped looking at the night sky. And, even though we are seeing more extreme weather, we continue to regulate our lives more by the clock than by the sun and moon and stars.

God has made, and placed us in, a wonderful world. And the seasons, caused by the tilt and movement of the earth relative to the sun, are key to much of the wonder. No seasons would mean no harvest. No autumn and winter would mean no pattern of slowing down and speeding up. No winter and summer would mean no alternation of hibernation or rest with vigorous full-on living.

These patterns and rhythms of life matter. They are part of how we were made, who we are. And they picture for us how God works in the world and in our lives. This spring look for the renewal of life which God gives to the world. Look for his renewal in your life. Ask him for green shoots, new hope, dreams of a brighter future.

May this hinge in the year be a hinge in our lives. May we move from sleep to wakefulness, from darkness into light.

With best wishes

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