

I've got something very important to show you. I must take great care because the item inside the box is priceless, not owned by me but temporarily on loan. I'm going to pick up the box very carefully and bring it a bit closer. (After a few steps, I contrived as naturally as possible to drop the box, displaying suitable consternation at the sound of devastation within.) I can't bear to look inside, so who would like to open the box for me. So what have we here? A pile of toy bricks, but there's also another box. I'll lift it out now. Could you please help me open the second box? I'd better be very, very careful this time. What's this? Wow it's a globe!

Of course, as you all now realise, the 'accident' was pre-planned and the globe is perfectly safe. But in real life, our world, sadly, is not nearly as safe as this; in fact, it's not safe at all. We live in a world in which day after day we hear about the threat to its wildlife, thousands of species threatened by imminent extinction; a world in which the few remaining rainforests are being systematically destroyed, adding to the problems of global warming resulting from years of pollution; a world in which the rich get richer and the poor get poorer, in which resources are plundered with no thought of tomorrow; and which, with the weapons of mass destruction at our disposal, we could virtually obliterate at the push of a button. Today, as never before, our world needs these words stamped upon it: **'FRAGILE! HANDLE WITH CARE!'**

Of course, we can say, that these things don't concern us; that we don't really understand them, and, even if we did, there is nothing we can do; the decisions that matter are in the hands of politicians and statesmen. But today tells us different: it reminds us that we are all part of one world with a responsibility for its future, to one another and to future generations. It reminds us that we have a voice which we can and must make heard. It reminds us that this world in which we live is not finally ours to do what we like with, but God's, loaned by him in trust. And it reminds us that when enough people show the will for change, then change will begin to happen.

Our world truly is fragile, and needs to be handled with infinite care. Can we afford to let go?