

Greetings from St James' Normanton on Soar



Be Still and Aware of God within and all around

Grounded Or not?

I haven't been feeling too grounded this year! Falling when in a rush, and trying to avoid an e-scooter left me with some pain for a long time. When did I get to the age where I "have a fall " instead of "fell over?"

However, if feeling grounded means being present, emotionally stable, and connected to yourself and your surroundings, allowing you to respond to life with clarity and calm, then there seems precious little of it about. Feeling grounded in our times is increasingly hard: we can look back over the last decade and see so many critical moments which in themselves are huge but keep coming until we are almost unsurprisable..... (is that a word?!). Bob once put it that it's like a lot of streams coming together becoming a torrent which threatens to overwhelm.

Such a lack of trust, misuse of power, of uncertainty, and mental and emotional noise getting in the way of reflection and a sense of balance or nuance. To focus on what one wants to read, write or do and get on with is difficult enough, but to go into one's interior world, to still the internal conversations and "Wait for God in the Silence", as the Julian meetings put it, can feel like a real challenge.

For example, when I put on my laptop to write this it took nearly five minutes to get rid of all the stuff- Co-pilot saying how can I help you? Offers of new Microsoft updates, updates imposed without requests, change in layout uncalled for, adverts when you do a search, news popping up that cover the screen...AI and Social Media ever present uninvited, and increasingly revealing the challenges to our society they bring. Yes, my answer is GO AWAY.....but however I try to block them back they come, trying to manipulate....

Being grounded, in touch with our being, our earth and feeling part of the whole of creation is increasingly essential for our peace of mind, in a time where peace is increasingly scarce. In Tai Chi we talk about "being grounded" and I find it really helpful: the calm breathing, being aware of the breath within in our slow movements together.

Being part of this group is so helpful, and Angela talked about our personal "Holy of Holies" and about taking ourselves within, and today there was a wonderful sermon on love and trusting in God: based on St Paul, Philippians 4 v1-9: *Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*

With Thanksgiving: turning my reflections to the love and goodness around me, the beauty of our world in lovely Autumn days as the season turns, and the robin singing on the window sill.

In another of God's coincidences, thanks to Bob last week for his mention of Martin Laird's book *Into the Silent Land*. I opened it and there it was: *He who learns must suffer. And even in our sleep pain that cannot forget falls drop by drop upon the heart, and in our own despair, against our will, comes wisdom to us by the awful grace of God.* Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 1.177

Alongside it: *By waiting and by calm you shall be saved, in quiet and in trust your strength lies.* Isaiah 30:15
So, supported by sharing our Stilling Prayer time with others...

Going into our Quiet

In the darkness of the evening
The eyes of my heart are awake to you.
In the quiet of the night I long to hear intimations of your love.
In the sufferings of the world and the struggles of my life
I seek your graces of healing.
At the heart of the brokenness around me
And in the hidden depths of my own soul
I seek your touch of healing, O God.
For there you reside.
In the hidden depths of life, O God,
There you reside.

from JP Newell, *Celtic Benedictions*

Coming out of Quiet time

In the busyness of our days grant us a calmness of seeing, O God.
In the conflicting voices of our hearts grant us a calmness of hearing.
Let our seeing and hearing our words and our actions
Be rooted in the silent certainty of your presence.
Let my passions for life and the longings for justice that stir within us
Be grounded in the experience of your stillness.
Let my life be rooted in the ground of your peace, O God.
Let me be rooted in the depths of your peace.