

Pastoral Letter 25th February

Dear friends,

As the weather has been a little bit milder over the past few days I've managed each day to have my lunch sat in the conservatory, overlooking the rectory back garden. What this has meant is that I've had a great ring side seat to watch the drama. The drama that is revealing itself as some of the birds begin their annual ritual jousting for territory, in preparation for their nesting. The three male blackbirds have seemingly been playing an increasingly aggressive game of hide and seek around the large shrubbery, whereas the robins, who I always imagine as the matadors of the garden, charge at any intruders on their patch, their red cape emblazoned across their breast.

This annual ornithological drama means that the birds are preparing themselves, they're getting ready for a time when they can feel safe in the knowledge that they've done all that they can to have secured a space to call their own, a space to nest, a space that gives to them almost a sense of their own identity. A period of mild weather however, can inevitably lull them into a false sense of security, believing that all is well to go ahead with their nesting, only for there then to be a very hard and sudden cold snap. (I've known snow in April several times in my lifetime).

How we go about preparing for something can often say a lot about ourselves. Jesus whilst in the wilderness for those 40 days, which we mirror in our time of Lent, was being prepared for his public life as God's son. When Jesus was tempted to turn the stones into bread to take away his hunger, knowing his scripture well, he quotes from the book of Deuteronomy and says;

'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'
(Matthew 4 v4)

What Jesus was in effect conveying was although we need of course physical food to live, our lives are made up of much more than just the physical. To be fully alive we also must nurture and grow as well as prepare, our spiritual wellbeing.

I pray that individually and together we can find ways in our lives to become ever more aware of the beauty of the physical world around us, as well as the drama that is constantly being revealed, and the importance of our spiritual wellbeing for who we are. Helping us to grow, no matter how young or old we might be, in our relationship with God.

Love & prayers

Revd Neil

