

Pastoral letter 29th April

Dear friends,

I was sat in the conservatory at the Rectory earlier this week, having a strong cup of afternoon tea. I do like my tea strong and this probably comes from when I was a little boy and hearing my grandmother say, whenever she brewed in her words 'proper tea' in her large china tea pot, that if you couldn't see the tea spoon standing vertical in your tea, it wasn't quite strong enough!

As I sat there, reading one of the latest editions of the RSPB magazine, 'Nature's home', I came across a series of short articles by famous people and my eyes were drawn immediately to the one by Monty Don, who I so enjoying watching and listening to on Gardener's world. In it he shared in his words, a powerful lesson, in how to observe things around him. He thought there must be some secret to it, but he had been simply told by an expert ornithologist, that all he needed to do was really to look.

This resonated with me because a few days earlier I'd listened to an interview on the radio and heard David Hockney, who for many is thought of as being one of our greatest living artists, talking about how in this time of Spring he has been inspired in his art, by not just seeing but properly looking, at the beauty of the emerging colours.

There is so much to see as we go about our lives, in the beauty of the natural world around us, but how often do we take the time just to be still and look? I write these letters usually sat at my desk in the study at the Rectory and I look out on an enormous Sycamore tree. The tree is majestic in size and its leaves are just beginning to emerge, which is completely changing the view that I can see. By looking closely, a beautiful biodiverse world is revealed.

It was Jesus himself who said, when talking about who he was and is,

"...whoever sees me sees him who sent me." John 12 v 45

In effect what Jesus was saying was that if we see him then we see God, because as Christians we believe that Jesus is God's son. If we believe that God is love, then when we see acts of loving kindness or we carry out such acts for others, then in turn we see God not only in our own lives but also in the world around us.

There is something divinely wonderful in looking and seeing the beauty of the natural world, and seeing God in all things, from the wings of a butterfly, to the perfectly formed shell of a snail (even when the snail in question has to be physically moved away from my lettuces!)

Love & prayers

Revd Neil

