

WYLYE ORGAN SERVICE REFLECTION: 23 MAY 2024

Growing stronger in faith

Our reading from Paul's letter to the Colossians made me think of faith in terms of a flowering plant, all the stronger for being deeply planted in good soil, just as we are rooted at baptism, and then growing into a promise fulfilled.... like the thriving growth we see all around us at this time of year. Springtime - an opportunity to reflect on the miracle of life and its flourishing, both in the natural world, and in our spiritual lives. A while ago now, I wrote a poem, describing a bulb, buried in the dark soil and making its way towards the light. 'The Humble Flower Bulb' is a metaphor for growth in our spiritual lives.

Cocooned in the cool damp soil,
I sit awaiting the call,
Not knowing what lies ahead,
If indeed something at all.

I feel safe where I am now -
Nothing to threaten my peace.
Yet there's more to me than this,
A yearning that does not cease.

Is this all there is to life?
No - some warmth seeps down at last.
Hope is revived by the sun,
The time for slumber is past.

Green shoots of rebirth and life
Push upwards with all their might;
No more inert in the dark,
They emerge into the light.

How bright and warm it is here!
But my work is far from done.
Shoots turn into leaves and sway
Under the life-giving sun.

Thinking I could do no more,
That I'd done all in my power,
With a surge of utmost joy,
At last I bring forth a flower!

A bulb or a seed is planted with hope and faith in its embryonic promise that it will flourish. Each time we plant a bulb or seed, we do so in a spirit of optimism, but it will of course need nurturing, in the same way as any seed of hope does once it is sown. There is very little in life about which we can be totally certain, but our spiritual faith sees us through those times when our hopes are dashed. In the life of a plant, that may be when the weather doesn't suit strong growth, or an over-zealous dog decides to dig in the wrong place. It's hard to predict what will happen to our hopes and dreams..... Yet sometimes we are surprised by the unexpected - a shoot growing from the compost heap; or a forgotten bulb, planted a few seasons ago, appearing on a day when the weather is right. Faith means that we don't, we can't give up, can't stop planting those seeds of hope in our lives ,and in those of others. We need patience, perseverance, and God's promise that ultimately, all who believe may not perish, but have eternal life.