

Connecting faith and daily life

Kathryn Fleming *reflects on*
Job 1:1; 2:1-10 and Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:5-12

In almost any discussion of the Bible, someone will say indignantly, something along the lines of: "I can't deal with the Old Testament God, who's so remote, capricious and sometimes downright cruel." Certainly, the story of Job's trials, sanctioned by God and implemented by Satan, would appear to support this view. It serves, too, to confirm the worst fears of those who, confronted by the problem of pain in a broken world, are quick to declare God a monster. For if God has power to shape the universe, could those who are innocent not be protected from disaster? The message we receive here is hard to translate. If God is speaking, we don't think much of the message.

But that, of course, is not the whole story.

In the reading from Hebrews we hear that: "Long ago God spoke to our ancestors... by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son." A Son – human like us, one bearing "the exact imprint of God's very being", sharing the divine DNA, but also bearing the pain, misery and indignity of undeserved affliction. One for whom no aspect of our existence is out of bounds, tasting, and swallowing, death for us all. God in Christ goes through suffering before and beside us, transforming desolation by the power of love. God is not remote at all, but with us always, our friend and brother, leading the way home. 🙏



Divine DNA

Thank you, Lord, that your Son Jesus speaks your message of love for all to hear. Help us to listen for his voice today and every day, as we follow him through life, through death and to our home in heaven. Amen.

Autumn thoughts

Notes from a small garden

by Julian Smith

Autumn is the time for putting the garden "to bed" for the winter. The secateurs are busy and manuals are consulted to learn what should be pruned when, and by how much. Do we sacrifice the last colourful "hoorah" of bedding plants to make way for spring bulbs, or do we wait another week? Hard work and decisions go hand in hand.

Autumn in the garden isn't a sad, depressing time; it's a time of hope

for the future – a future of daffodils in swathes, "lasagne" planting in pots giving weeks of colour and texture and the first buds on the cut-back roses. Autumn in the garden is about care in the here and now with hope for the future.

Like the autumn gardener, Christians are called to offer care in the here and now fuelled by the hope that God's kingdom of peace and justice can be a reality. 🙏

“ I feel like a little tug in a great storm. But I'm fastened to a great ship on ahead. It's going into port and can't lose its way.”

Patricia St John (1919-1993), missionary and writer

Finding God on the smallholding

by Jeni Parsons

October is the month that feels like sabbath, the time God rested from creation and then told us to rest likewise. It's the sabbath month here. The pigs are in the freezer; the ewe lambs have gone to their new flocks while the ram lambs live on here for another year; the ewes are resting and building stamina for a new year of pregnancy, birthing and rearing; the poultry

have mostly stopped laying and are losing old feathers and growing new plumage ready for winter. Even the grass is slowing its growing. And I am resting after harvesting and clearing, preparing and sorting.

And God rests with us through this season of resting and looking towards the next month's task of remembering. Such sabbath-ing is profound and we need it for rest and reflection, for simply be-ing for a while and giving thanks: *Diolchgarwch* in Welsh – thanksgiving and gratitude. 🙏