

A Reflection for Earth Day

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As I write, following the dark days of Autumn and Winter, the Apple tree in our garden is beginning to blossom. Each year, during the onset of Spring, it is as if the tree rises from its slumber and its bare branches slowly begin to emerge with new life. The blossom is a vibrant pink and, as I gaze out of the kitchen window, I find myself

smiling and appreciating this sure sign that the season of new life, new beginnings, and the return of lengthening daylight, is here. Alongside the apple blossom, the grass begins to grow quickly and is a deep green, and the flowers and rose bushes also burst into life.

During the onset of Spring, we can find ourselves reflecting upon the months that have passed, and upon how Autumn and Winter often encourage us to turn inwards, to appreciate the warmth of the indoors in contrast to the cold outside. Spring, however, invites us to look ahead, to begin to make plans for the Summer, and to begin to venture out into nature. Close to where I live is a public park, and as the Spring progresses, I find that I feel attracted to spending more time in this place, immersed in the trees, bushes and plants and to sit quietly, listening to the symphony of birdsong, that the Spring brings. It is a joy to sit quietly and pay attention to the many and varied sounds that can be heard in the park where the sounds of nature intertwine and intermingle with the sounds which emanate from human discourse and activity.

It is as if the return of the Spring inspires, encourages, and invites us to engage with the world of nature, to pay attention to its multiplicity of vibrant colours, including the lush greens, the Van Gogh yellows and the luminous blues, which interact with the vibrancy and energy of sunlight to illuminate the world, to make it bright, showing us the beauty, complexity and fecundity of nature in all of its glorious, yet fragile, beauty and complexity.

We are bombarded daily with news of, for example, conflict, war, climate change, desertification, extinction of species, pollution of our rivers, and scarcity of water. At times it can appear to be overwhelming, and we can find ourselves challenged about what to say or do in response to these clear and present challenges and dangers. However, perhaps the starting point for any response to these is to sit in nature, to be still, to listen, to pay attention, to look upon the wonders which surround us, and to immerse ourselves in them, to gaze upon the world with gentleness and affection. In the midst of a world of complex challenges, we can see, and experience, the transformative and restorative capacity for nature to renew our spirit and to enable to see the extraordinary in the ordinary, to become lost, yet energised, in wonder.