



From the Director

Ester DeWaal in her book "Lost in Wonder" tells us about Michelangelo, engaged in sculpting one of his statues. While doing his work he was reputed to have said:

'Another few days and life
will break through'.

Yet when I watch the process by which stone becomes a statue, I am aware of just how slow and how costly it has to be, and how undramatic. In recent years by visiting the stonemasons' yard of my local cathedral I have been able to watch decayed stones of a great medieval building being replaced and renewed by new stones straight from the quarry. It is often difficult to see much progress, and the skill of the craftsmen shows me just how laborious and yet simultaneously how delicate their work must be. It is a strange art, for it starts with what is an immense block of clumsy, raw, unshaped stone, which by being simplified and shaped is changed into something new.

We are on a journey to
become the people we are
meant to be.

As in the case of the master craftsman, there will be times where we need support to chip away the rough edges or mould us into the person we are meant to become.

I am a gardener,
I know plants grow at the
bottom first,
Root before stem,
Stem before flower.

The soil must be rich, dark,
I must water until it's soaked
So thirsty roots
Will go deep to drink
Not fan out on the surface
To wither in the heat.

Go down first,
Trust depths and darkness,
Then flower.

Author Unknown

*From the book, "Lost in Wonder"
by Esther De Waal*

Part of the picture for me is allowing God to be part of my life and part of this journey. DeWaal describes it as being on a pilgrimage, a journey towards God. If I am open to journeying on this path, it will necessarily mean some form of transformation.

Transformation comes about when we are willing to admit God's work into our lives, to hear God's voice and to act upon it. Mind, senses, heart, must all be open to receive. This means that we may pay attention on without being passive – listening, hearing, reflecting. At this point the monastic understanding of humility has a role to play. It is unfortunate that it is a concept which has become so unattractive, and carries associations of low self-esteem, for in fact, its true meaning lies in the proper sense of self. It means knowing and accepting my limitations, and not denying them; I am not in charge; I am not the ultimate source of wisdom. I am not sufficient; I cannot manage on my own. When I admit that God is in charge I am willing and ready to change, probably time and time again – which is simply another way of saying that I am ready to open myself up to a process of continuing transformation. St Benedict gave his monks a triad of silence, obedience and humility as the basic tools for their vocation. Taken together they enrich one another. Translated into my own circumstances I see them as asking of me the triad of silence, listening, emptiness, and the commitment to being a disciple, one who learns, who follows, who is ready to open up to the new.

This may sound a little confronting but it can be achieved one small step at a time. To begin the journey we need to take a quality time out from our busy lifestyles to give it a chance to happen.

The divine potter is shaping the raw clay of my being, which is making me into a larger and larger vessel. I co-operate by being willing and not resistant, for essentially this is God at work on me. I am in the hands of a God who can do all things.

Br Bill Sullivan
Director