

Spirituality of Ministers – 29 September 2018

Visualisation

Just imagine you are walking through the grounds of a large manor house. It's a sunny day just like today... a little bit of cloud in the distance... it looks dark but the forecast has been good. The darkness of the far off cloud begins to unsettle you...it's a long way to the car if a shower comes... I should have brought an umbrella...that would have looked daft with the others in their shorts and summer clothes...your eye is drawn to the orchard...you walk slowly over to the gate in the wall... you go in and meander around between the trees...the apples are look healthy with ruddy skin....And the blackcurrants are almost ready for picking...the range of colours of the various berries lifts your heart as you take in the rainbow of fruits....Then you become distracted by a gap in the orchard wall...you are drawn to see what lies beyond yet you have not even half explored the orchard...as you draw close to the opening you see a field beyond...it looks like flowers but even at this distance you can see that all is not well there....you walk into another walled garden this time of flowers... they have been neglected...parched for water...wilting and burnt from the summer sun...you get angry...who could let this happen...too lazy to water them I suppose...maybe they don't even notice...the orchard will look after itself but the plants and flowers have not been cared for...you stay in the decaying garden while the flourishing orchard awaits you...you begin to think of yourself and the areas of life that have not been watered...prayer...relationships energy for the Gospel...my ministry ...you can sit there and wallow...or you can come back through the orchard and stand under the shade of a leafy pear tree...or sit on the pretty orange painted bench and give thanks for what is good and nourishing...you listen to God's voice speaking through the shade and the colours...the promise of a rich harvest of fruit for jam making...for desserts...you notice the birds singing in the trees...you try to imitate their song...anyone would think you were gone soft in the head...your eye is drawn to the gap in the wall and the arid dry ground that lies behind it...stay with your thoughts...your imagination...and ask yourself how am I today as I begin a new season of work? – in the context of the orchard I ask myself am I alert to the abundant fruits of my own work – am I content that the seeds I planted may not bear fruit in my time – that their growth may be hindered by the neglect of others or of mine. What about new members? What difference does that accompaniment make to my life...to my hopes for the future...to my dreams for the building up of the kingdom of God here and now...shared hopes mean joint operations...companions on the journey...do I welcome their input...or am I threatened by them...if I take Jesus as my model then it's the more the merrier...men and women...to gather the harvest...they are only a few if we take the short view...but what a richness awaits if we broaden our horizons...what is that image like?...what is being asked of me?

Song - Come with Me Into The Fields