

Pause for a Moment

On the wall in Mother Teresa's Home for the Dying in Calcutta there is a board bearing a framed text of a Hindu Poem,

'If you have two pieces of bread,
'Give one to the poor,
Sell the other,
And buy hyacinths
To feed your soul.'

Years ago in a big city in this country there was a market located in the appropriately named Big Market. However wintry the weather there were flower stalls. It was the delight of one of the Sisters, when young, to buy from time to time a little bunch of primroses. She wrote at the time, "to remind me of a wistful dream within". It was many years later before she met the Lord Jesus and the 'wistful dream' was realised, but the delicate beauty in some way reached deep within, far beyond the busy, noisy, city streets. John Michael Talbot wrote, 'All creation bears the traces of its creator and will lead the spiritually sensitive seeker back to God'.¹ Our souls need to be fed, as well as our bodies.



The beauty of a flower, a rainbow or a sunset can draw us close to God. The difficulty arises when we are going so fast and life is so hectic that we never stop, even for a moment, to look and wonder and feel the Lord near in the beauty of his creation. Those who have never known the joy of finding beauty in unexpected places have starved their souls. Perhaps it is a violet, self-sown, pluckily surviving in a cranny in a wall. It may be a rose peeping through the window, one of our joys in Bethany. It may be the smile on the face of a saint. Someone wrote of Mother Teresa, "Bless you, Calcutta, for in your

wretchedness you have given birth to saints."² Beauty is to be found everywhere, if only we had eyes to see. We don't have to consciously think, just gaze. In fact the moment is gone if we begin to reason and analyse. We miss so much if we go through life with our eyes closed, or only open to the television, computer, or the next piece of work to be done.

Those who are ill are often refreshed if we remember to take, when we visit, something beautiful. Someone we know was lifted from gloomy, depressed thoughts by watching a hyacinth gently unfold, bringing hope where there was despair. We read about Alice whose four-year old son died from cancer. Hundreds had prayed for him and his parents believed he would be healed. His mother said this, 'Perhaps, for now, prayer for me is looking up in the dark starry night or at the rising sun and pouring forth my simple prayers yet heartfelt words: God you are there, you are sovereign and you are immortal. I am here confused, broken, saddened, and extremely mortal. And for your unchanging love, I am thankful.'³

Many of us will be going on holiday this month. The temptation is often to cram in as many new experiences as possible, or collapse in exhaustion onto a deckchair on the beach. We may delight our minds and our bodies but our souls will be starved. The Lord is calling us to pause and be refreshed; to draw close to him in wonder. It may be the intricacy of a tiny, half-hidden flower, a delicate shell

held in our hands, the relentless swell of the mighty ocean, or the grandeur of the Alps, but in quietness and stillness our souls will be fed.

Jesus said, 'Look at how the lilies in the field grow ----- even Solomon with his riches was not dressed as beautifully as one of these flowers'.⁴ Learn from them. The heavenly Father looks after them and he will look after you.

¹ Cries from the Heart. Johann Christoph Arnold

² City of Joy Dominique Lapierre

³ Cries from the Heart Johann Christoph Arnold

⁴ Matt.6:28-29 NCV