

View from the Rectory window November 2022

As I sit here in front of a blank page wondering what would be interesting and uplifting to write for this month's issue – I am struggling! This may partially be due to writing in October on a day when signs of autumn are all around for me to see, while also sensing that I am not yet prepared to let go of summer's vibrancy or outgoingness (not a proper word I know but hopefully makes sense). The seasons are a continuous cycle that imparts the wisdom and natural law of our creator. However, they also reflect and inspire our moods and feelings. When we look out on the rich mellowness and depth of autumn foliage, we know that the unique colours and intensity of autumn is often delivered wrapped in cold winds, chilly nights, and creeping darkness. This can trigger a sense of melancholy and mournfulness that I always recognise in myself and cope with by beginning a conscious countdown to the 21st day of December, after which I can tell myself that we are then on the way to spring.

In winter we are wrapped in winter clothing, warm blankets, and the promise of spring to come, by comparison autumn is a far more paradoxical season; we have such beauty, resonance, and profundity in nature's autumn displays. However, autumn's splendour is gilded with a deeper significance of signalling that it is time to look inward, turn for home and to gather around the hearth. To find comfort, rest and solace in a cheerful fire burning in the hearth of our homes, hearts, and lives until the warmth and colour of spring calls us to be out and about again. Autumn can be the most beautiful and dramatic season, even though it is a season tinged with sadness. A sadness that initially calls us to the warmth of love and then in the fullest sense the coming of the spark to ignite the fire. **A fire sparked by the divine, incarnate in the Christmas story of the advent of Christ.**

It is this sense of transition of the seasons, as well as our own mood and disposition, that recalls the phrase 'mind the gap'. Between the contrasting strength of the colours of the autumn leaves and their impending fall there is a 'gap'. A period between the intensity of autumn colour and the letting go to fall to the earth. As we reflect on our letting go, when our colours deepen and then fade as we prepare to let go, think of these words.

"I like spring, but it is too young. I like summer, but it is too proud. So I like best of all autumn, because its tone is mellower, its colours are richer, and it is tinged with a little sorrow. Its golden richness speaks not of the innocence of spring, nor the power of summer, but of the mellowness and kindly wisdom of approaching age. It knows the limitations of life and its content."

— Lin Yutang

Rev. Richard Higgins