

Dear all

On the back page of the Church Times, there is a feature by Malcolm Guite, who is an English poet, singer-songwriter, Anglican priest, and academic; currently a Bye-Fellow and chaplain of Girton College, Cambridge. His most recent feature refers to Samuel Coleridge's poem *This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison*. Coleridge had invited some friends, including Charles Lamb, to come and visit him, with the plan to go for some much-anticipated country walks. That very morning, Coleridge's wife spilt a scalding hot pan of milk over his foot – thus ensuring that he was unable to go for any walks over the duration of the visit. The poem, link below, is his reflection of being stuck in the garden while his companions were able to enjoy the planned excursion.

Well, they are gone, and here must I remain
This lime-tree bower my prison!

In his imagination, the poet walks the walk with them, sees the sights they see, imagines how it must be for his city-based friend who yearns for the countryside...

Then, suddenly, there is a moment of illumination. The wider world breaks in upon him where he is, and he sees things with a new perspective.

A delight
Comes sudden on my heart, and I am glad
As I myself were there! Nor in this bower,
This little lime-tree bower, have I not mark'd
Much that has sooth'd me.

And so he determines that

Henceforth I shall know
That Nature ne'er deserts the wise and pure;
No plot so narrow, be but Nature there,
No waste so vacant, but may well employ
Each faculty of sense, and keep the heart
Awake to Love and Beauty! and sometimes
'Tis well to be bereft of promis'd good,
That we may lift the soul, and contemplate
With lively joy the joys we cannot share.

I am reminded of William Blake's "To See a World..." (Fragments from "Auguries of Innocence").

To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour.

It is all a matter of perspective. Interestingly, and challengingly, Blake's poem ends:

Man was made for Joy and Woe;
And when this we rightly know
Thro' the World we safely go.

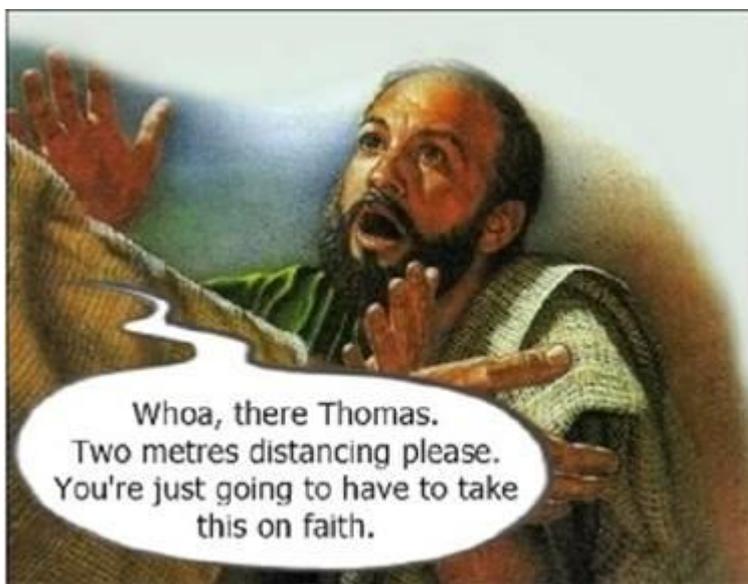
Every Night and every Morn
Some to Misery are Born.
Every Morn and every Night
Some are Born to sweet delight.
Some are Born to sweet delight,
Some are Born to Endless Night.

Links to the full poems are:

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43992/this-lime-tree-bower-my-prison>

https://www.poetryloverspage.com/poets/blake/to_see_world.html

This picture popped up in a post earlier today – very appropriate for today's Gospel reading:



Please note that this week I am going to take Wednesday as a day off. This is because the funeral of Anne Smart will take place on Tuesday 21st at 2.00pm. A memorial service is planned for when we return back to normal – details to be confirmed.

Stay safe

Blessings and love

Mark