

With God in the Garden

Mary, Mary, quite contrary, How does your garden grow.....

I'm sure we remember these words of the familiar nursery rhyme from our childhood, but can you supply the answer? Sr Jane Dixon, in her address at the MWA day in Dukinfield back in April, asked us this question. She was referring, neither to "silver bells and cockle shells", nor to "little maids all in a row" but, to us as individuals. How are we growing in our Christian faith? As the years go by are we deepening our roots in understanding more about Jesus? Are we opening ourselves more to the love of God? Are we spreading our branches out into the spaces around us and thus spreading Gods word? Perhaps we still need to do some more weeding and pruning back within ourselves. Maybe we are able to look back over the last twelve months in a positive way and say "yes" we are better people than we were last year. As the plants in the garden are in summer splendour once more, are we too in full bloom making a difference to the area around us.

Sr Dixon also asked us to consider what kind of flower we thought we were. In our papers we have talked about poppies, poinsettias, Christmas roses and healing plants such as lavender. Each one has a place and a purpose in a garden, along with the dandelion and the daisy, the creeping ivy and the hawthorn, the flashy chrysanthemums and bashful snowdrop. All need nurturing and feeding. Some need to live in the full sun whereas others prefer the shade. Many like wet moist conditions and others thrive in desert like places. All require different conditions in which to reach their full potential. Have we reached our full potential or have we still more to give – in our church life and to give to God as individuals?

In one of our first papers we discussed the Garden of Eden and noted that God planted the garden and placed Adam there to "cultivate and guard it". That is just as relevant today. We are modern day Adams (and Eves), placed in God's garden to "cultivate, nurture and guard", not just his plants and creatures but his kingdom here on earth.

I want to end with these thoughts by an unknown author from

A gardener's Reflection

First look at the weeds:

weed out the gossip, weed out the laziness
weed out indifference and weed out pride

Plant five rows of peas:

patience, peace, promptness, politeness and prayer

Then plant five rows of lettuce:

let us be faithful, let us be loving
let us be useful, let us be trusting and let us be grateful

Then we can turn to the reliable turnips:

turn up on time, turn up with a smile,
turn up with a new idea and turn up with new determination