

Play in imagination

Ricarda Witcombe *reflects on* Psalm 104:1-10. 26. 35

Psalm 104 gives us language for worship. However we may be feeling, it calls us to dig deep, to remind our innermost being that God is great. Strikingly, the first line is addressed to ourselves: "Bless the Lord, O my soul." We often ask God to bless us. When God blesses, God pours out holiness into whatever we hold before God. When we bless God, we pour out our own selves into God's hands. So although this line is partly about recognising who God is, it also about knowing that God delights in all we place before God: God delights in us.

In fact this is a psalm full of delight. The lines are almost playful as the writer tries to imagine God creating the universe, wearing light like a garment, stretching out the heavens like a tent, riding on the wind in a chariot made out of the clouds. God is everywhere in these images of creation. What if we saw God so deeply involved and delighted in the world we live in? What might we imagine God doing in commanding the elements of nature today? Let your mind play in imagination as you take your own blessing to God. 🍷

Loving God, open our eyes to your glory today. May we see you in one another and in all the created world. And may we bless you in all we do and in all we are. Amen.

Holy Places

St Aldhelm's

by Heather Smith

St Aldhelm's Well in Douling, Somerset, is a spring, the source of the River Sheppey. Walk along the path opposite the church, past a disused waterwheel which once pumped water into the village, turning left at the end down a steep hill. At the bottom is a high wall and a water trough with spring water flowing into it. You could easily miss it, although a small notice proclaims its name.

The Victorians were responsible for the wall and if you are very lucky you may spot a water vole. Wild garlic scents air in springtime and in the summer the trough is surrounded by ferns. Climb up the path to the right, into the shady forest above the wall. To your left you will find the spring itself, flowing from two arches into a pool.

Fulfilling his role as a pastor, St Aldhelm was on his rounds of the diocese when he died in this quiet place. It reminds us, perhaps, that those who are famous and important are just like us, and that we can find God in the places where we share life. 🍷



The books of the Old Testament *Leviticus*

by Gillian Cooper

Leviticus needs to be read in the context of a relationship between a holy God and an unholy people. It is set in the middle of a story. We have had the excitement of the exodus, the escape across the sea, hardship in the wilderness, the dramatic meeting with God on Mount Sinai. The Israelites are on

their way to their promised land, led by Moses and God.

Behind all the rather odd rules there seem to be two principles at work – order and distinctiveness. In God's world everything has its place, as we see in Genesis 1. Many of the rules of Leviticus involve avoiding things that do not fit. Seafood is avoided because it does not have fins and scales like proper fish, for example. Garments of mixed cloth are prohibited. And God's people are to be distinctive. They follow these rules, not because they are logical, but because they mark them out as God's people. These rules are designed to keep them safe in their relationship with a holy and sometimes dangerous God. 🍷

“Our salvation is in loving and cherishing his creation, in so living that others may have life.”

Gerard W. Hughes (1924-2014), Scottish Jesuit priest and spiritual writer