

a.m.d.g.

Fifth Sunday of Lent Year A

THE LARK ASCENDING

Vaughan Williams wonderfully evocative musical idea of the English landscape was inspired by the lines of a poem by George Meredith. It was written in 1914 for the violinist Marie Hall. This soulful music is taken from Meredith's poem describing the song of the lark:

He rises and begins to round,
He drops the silver chain of sound
Of many links without a break.....

The violin holds us in rapt contemplation, as it imitates the ascendant song of the lark. It is a tranquil evocation of a soul enraptured by beautiful bird song and the feeling of being in the countryside, if you like, it is a testimony to the freedom of the human spirit. A recognition of grace, beauty, love reaching beyond, it is the infinity of space. Indeed the violin climbs higher and higher until all sound ceases to be. We are then in another reality.

THE REALITY

We are now living in a time when more than ever we need to connect to the beauty of anything that nurtures our soul, well being, our depth of value and our love for others. It has been a blessing to hear birdsong on the clear, warm days this week. It is a blessing to once again realise the tremendous strength of the human spirit in the midst of adversity. We are touched by the many stories of good souls helping each other, and willingly letting their better selves shine! We can feel overwhelmed by the necessary constraints we are having to impose on ourselves – because now, paradoxically, we have to show that we care, by keeping our distance. This goes against our natural instincts – to want to reach out to those whom we love, especially in a time of need.

JESUS

Jesus always reached out to people – he wanted them to know healing in body, mind and spirit, he wanted to let people's souls soar like the lark ascending in the still air – singing its song. A sound that reminds us of how interconnected we are with each other and the whole of God's creation.

Jesus was always about life – he wept at the news that his friend Lazarus had died. It seemed that darkness had descended and shattered the lives of his friends. Yet, Jesus told Mary and Martha to have faith, and raised Lazarus from the tomb.

This foretaste of the Resurrection is a sign that even in the midst of crisis, fear, sickness and death, the soul is eternal – it is not bound by earthly constrictions – we are intimately connected with each other and with God through spiritual communion – a communion that soars, a song that flows in our mutual souls – with renewed hope, faith and love. A promise that we will come through, stronger for our trial, valuing more deeply those we cherish, those we love. Every soul is a unique gift from God, every soul is called to eternal life. A life that we are living now.

In the days and weeks ahead, may we remember the call of Jesus to each one of us to leave darkness and foreboding and move towards the light, attune our ear to the sound of the soul ascending – like the plaintive lark.

Listen to this great piece of music, it is the triumph of us all over what we have to face. The souls ascending and connecting beyond the isolation of earth bound limitation.

GEORGE MEREDITH – THE LARK ASCENDING

He rises and begins to round,
He drops the silver chain of sound
Of many links without a break,
.....
He is, the dance of children, thanks
Of sowers, shout of primrose banks,
And eye of violets while they breath;
All these the circling song will wreathe,
And you shall hear the herb and tree,
The better heart of men shall see,
Shall feel celestially, as long
As you crave nothing save the song.
Was never voice of ours could say
Our inmost in the sweetest way,
Like yonder voice aloft, and link,
All hearers in the song they drink:
Our wisdom speaks from failing blood,
Our passion is too full in flood,
We want the key of his wild note
Of truthful in a tuneful throat,
The song seraphically free
Of taint of personality,
So pure that it salutes the suns
The voice of ones for millions,
In whom the millions rejoice
For giving their one spirit voice.
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