

A LETTER FROM REV RONA

As gardens and allotments awake in Springtime, I wanted to turn our thoughts to the humble trellis. Why? Well, Richard Carter in his excellent book *Letters from Nazareth, a Contemplative Journey Home* explains the spirit of prayer using the image of a trellis. I highly recommend this book, which is a beautiful collection of letters written about all aspects of Richard's life of faith.



The sturdy wooden parts of a trellis remind us of prayers we know, or are said in churches, and the spaces in between are our own prayers. Rather than strangle the plants, trellises offer a structure to grow around – free, yet supported. It's a lovely image for prayer.

Canterbury Press have kindly agreed for me to quote from Richard Carter's book, and these extracts come from Chapter 40; a letter written in April 2022 entitled Prayer.

“When we pray, we are turning towards the beloved, face to face. Our attitude or orientation in prayer is most receptive when it is one of complete openness and acceptance, a readiness to let ourselves become mirrors of Christ. In this practice there is nothing formulaic, no rules carved in stone. Yet there is a trellis of the Spirit that helps the life of God to grow within and helps guide and nurture all that seeks the light and waits to bloom where it is planted.”

Stay Faithful

“As when we love a person, so when we love God. Love needs time, presence, and perseverance. There are heady moments of infatuation but there is also most importantly a constancy: a returning again and again to the beloved and a making space to be with. That faithfulness will involve moments of beauty and transformation but will also involve a faithfulness in the ordinary...”

The more we pray the easier it becomes. Prayer is as essential as breathing. We may think that breathing is boring but stick your head under the water and you will quickly realise that this faithfulness to the breath is life itself. Our prayer is not an optional extra. It is life itself.”

Slow down and give time to prayer

...our love can easily become crowded out or choked. It needs a place and a space in our lives. We often think we have no time. When we are busy, contemplative prayer is often the first thing we sacrifice, in a way we would not miss an arranged meeting or a planned event...

But...Would you miss the date with a person you love? To pray, we need to give a generous space to God, a priority booking, a time when we leave the hundred different alternatives at the door and come, just as we are...”

I have loved this book and hope you will too.

*With love
Rev Rona*