



Chester Cursillo Spring Newsletter 2024

Spring is a time of growth, new life, renewal and reflection, especially as we prepare for Lent and Easter.

Loving Lord, as we move towards the promise of Spring, we thank you for your unfailing love for us, through each season. Help us to prepare for Lent, by spring cleaning our lives, thoughts and deeds, a time of reflection and change, which will enable us to draw closer to you Lord.

Loving Lord, thank you for all the wonderful changes we see during the Spring season. For the gift of your precious Son, Jesus Christ, who choose to die an agonising death on a cross, so that we can be forgiven and walk in the light of his resurrection on Easter morning. Rita Stubbs



Outside, it is blowing a sharp North wind, and wet snow is sliding down my window, accumulating on the ledge at the bottom. I heard the news this morning: climate scientists presenting new evidence of how far short of our targets we are; global temperature this year already at 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial level; Benjamin Netanyahu resisting a cease-fire in Gaza; the Labour Party rowing back on green investment plans. It all makes me want to go back to bed, and pull the covers over my head, and hopefully wake up to spring sunshine and news of peace. But you know as well as I do that it ain't goin' to happen.....not yet.

So, what keeps us going? What makes it worthwhile getting up, and doing our little bit for God and neighbour? How can we remain enthusiastic over Cursillo's obsession with 'apostolic action'?

Here's an offering.

We're having a sermon series in church here in Marple about 'transformation'. Now, I'm a bit sceptical about 'transformation', I will admit. It was an 'in' word in the NHS, when I worked there. We had a 'transformation team' in the Trust- and, believe me, we all dreaded a visit from them, because they changed everything, then moved on, leaving you to sort out all the chaos.

So, I was reading 1 Corinthians 15, where St. Paul writes a lot about transformation: "We shall all be changed." "In the twinkling of an eye....." "This mortal body will put on immortality..." "Death has been swallowed up in victory." "If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied." Read it for yourselves.

And the chapter gets steadily more theological and rarified as St. Paul tries to describe the transformation that is coming. But what struck me is that he ends this magisterial chapter with a very down-to-earth command: "Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that, in the lord, your labour is not in vain" "Not in vain." Mmmm.

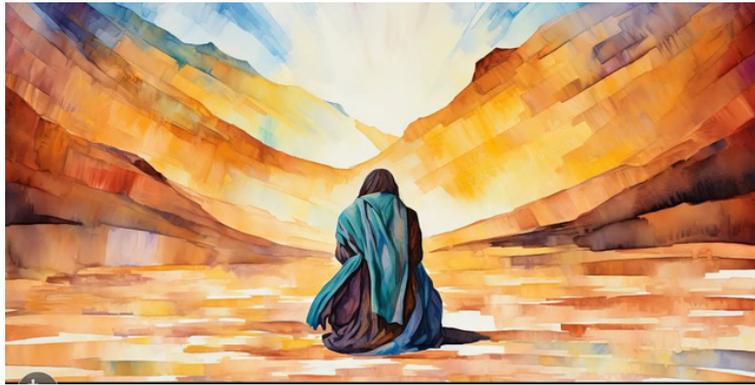
So, the weather is miserable, and the news depressing. But, remember that, in the Lord, our labour is not in vain; for the last word about the future of ourselves, our loved ones and our world is God's. And God's word is a word of life and love. Often we have only a mite to offer, but Jesus said it was more than enough.

So, we press onwards and upwards, step after weary step, trusting that, in our Father's economy, nothing is wasted, nor nothing lost. And just as Spring will surely come sometime, so will that final transformation, heralded by the angelic trumpeblast.

ULTREYA!

Tony Rablen, Spiritual Director, Chester

We journey to Easter...



Lent is a time to take time to let the power of
our faith story take hold of us,
a time to let the events get up
and walk around in us.

a time to intensify our living unto Christ,
a time to hover over the thoughts of our hearts,
a time to place our feet in the streets of
Jerusalem or to walk along the sea and listen
to his Word.

a time to touch his robe
and feel the healing surge through us.
a time to ponder and a time to wonder.... Lent
is a time to allow

a fresh new taste of God!
Perhaps we're afraid to have time to think, for
thoughts come unbidden.

Perhaps we're afraid to face our future
knowing our past.

Give us courage, O God,
to hear your Word
and to read our living into it.

Give us the trust to know we're forgiven and
give us the faith

to take up our lives and walk. Ann Weems

Gethsemane...



May we always remember that you understand the dark nights and difficult days we go through, continually walking besides us on life's journey. "As we trust in Jesus Christ, grant us wisdom to know what we must do, the will to want to do it, the courage to undertake it, the perseverance to continue to do it, and the strength to complete it." (New St Joseph People's Prayer Book) Also may we accept your forgiveness secure in the knowledge of your grace and loving kindness, for each and every one of your people.

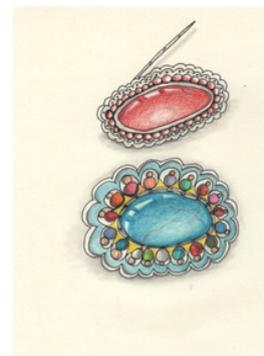
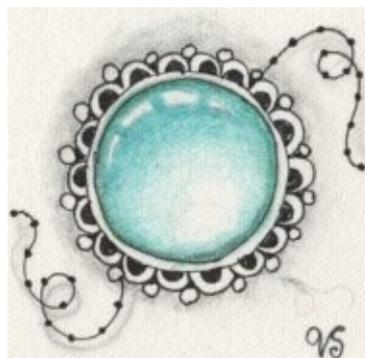
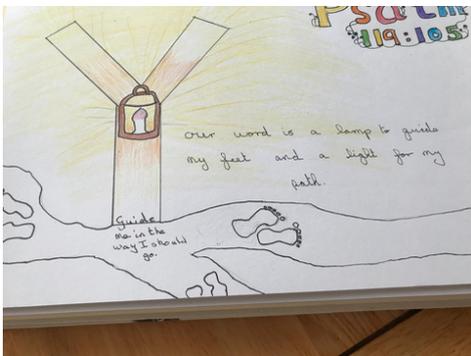
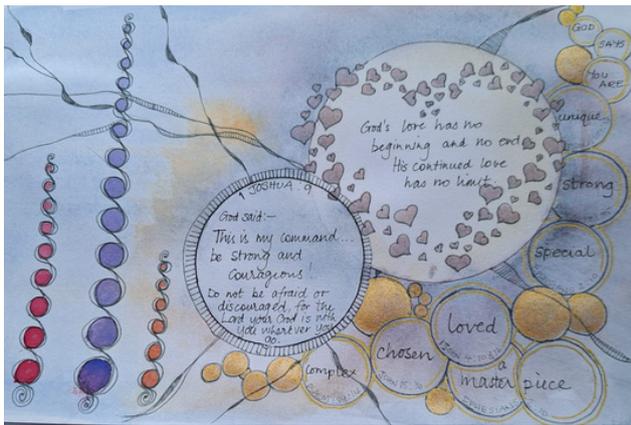
Loving Lord, I pray in the name of your precious Son, Jesus Christ, in your mercy hear my prayers. Amen. God bless Rita Stubbs

Colourful Journaling...

a creative way to journey through Lent to Easter

A group of us started Lent with a 5 day journaling challenge on zoom. Each afternoon we had a workshop on a different visual journaling topic, including a meditation on verses from the Bible. Some of us are continuing with a zoom meeting once a week to hold ourselves accountable to daily journaling during Lent.

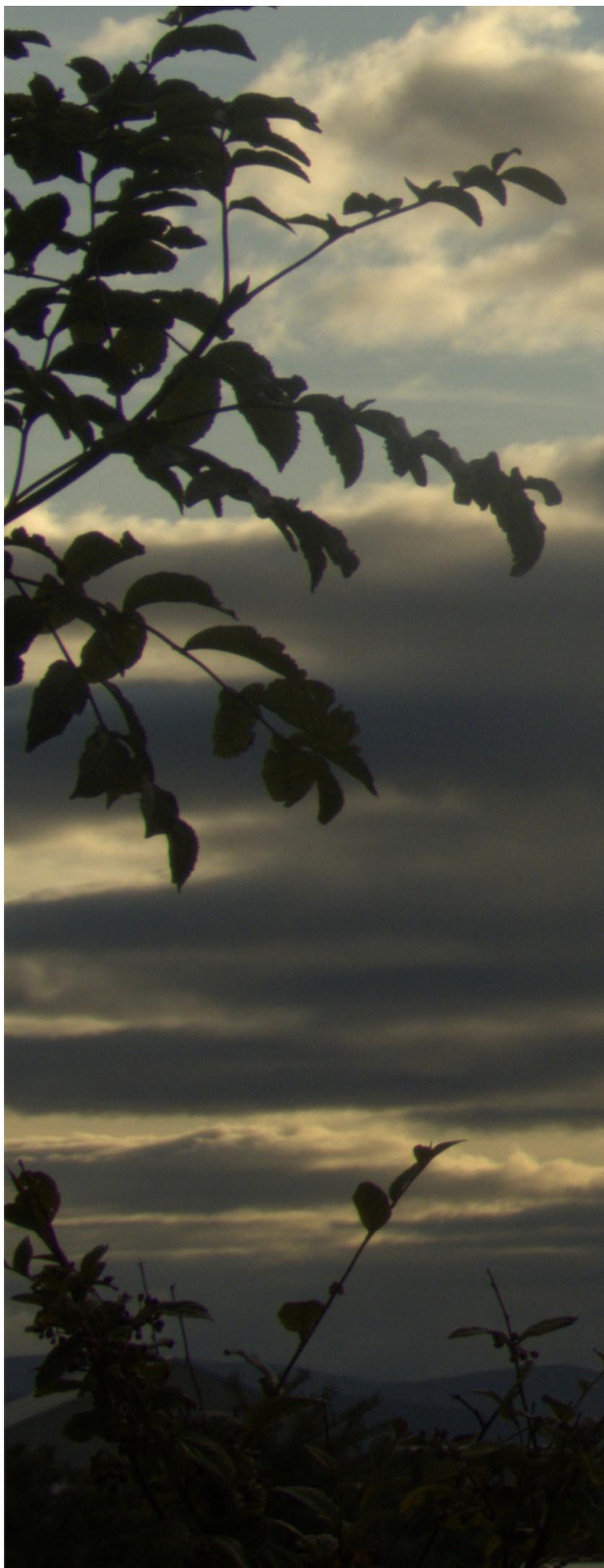
Here are some examples from three of the participants:



Vicki Schofield (member of North Cheshire and Wirral, and Lichfield Area Groups)

On Friday my hope died.
The sky wept itself dark
the ground broke apart
and all creation cried
for the bloodied innocence
hammered into a tree.
There were whispers
of a torn curtain,
but they didn't reach my ears
or mend my mangled heart
or stem the bitter tears
as we took
the body
down.
On Saturday we grieved,
hiding from the troops
whom we'd once believed
would be overthrown
by the carpenter's boy,
who had preached and fed
and healed,
and was now dead.
But then on Sunday –
The devastating beauty
of that Sunday –
when time and space
were blown out of shape
and angels wrapped in electric grace
rolled the impossible away
'He is not here'
they proclaimed
for glory had risen
our failings were forgiven
and the rules of life
and death were rewritten
as an empty tomb declared.
'Love is alive.'

Gideon Heugh Tearfund





"I am the resurrection and the life"

Wishing you all a blessed and Happy Easter!