

WINDS OF CHANGE

An apt title for the times; Lent, and the retirement of this Page's founder.

In response to a plea for volunteers, we have a short piece to start off with, which contains just the right set of metaphors for the season. Lent is much more than going without – self-discipline is but a tool to enable reflection, to enable a standing back to get a better view. This is hard to do in the middle of the Gala, but it an essential component of Christian life. It is hard to do during a 24 hour news cycle with its tempting buffet of attention-grabbing stuff. But do it we must, because, before we know it we will be with Jesus in the Garden, praying while those around us are asleep.

Prayer is something we might confine to church, but it is not. Prayer might well expand to that general awareness that we can try to maintain in our daily lives. It can be done while we do household tasks; the more mundane the better, for busy hands release the mind. The very acts of cleaning, mowing lawns, or dusting off books for the Gala are opportunities for prayer. Some walk or cycle. I even have a friend who prays aloud in his car while keeping his eyes on the road.

So, in the midst of busyness, clockwatching, and housework, here is a useful meditation on the meaning and value of prayer;

Cleaning air filters can be a reflective experience. Having looked up, I was appalled at the filth that had accumulated over the years. My hay fever is suddenly explained – and I was seized by an atypical urge to clear it all. It looked even worse from the stepping stool – and was not readily dislodged. It took time and some pains (neck and both shoulders!) to unblock it, and though the final product will never be white again, there was the gratification of a fresh(er) start.

Could this be compared to what happens when we look to God and become aware of things we urgently need to change. The closer we get to God - in prayer – the more we see what ails us. The Holy Spirit gives us the will and the power to oust it. Our lives are made purer and immediately healthier by the changes so wrought.

Tiffany Sayer and Richard Swarbrick