

Every Branch 5 Easter

“and every branch that does bear fruit, he prunes to make it bear even more”

I am certainly not the greatest gardener in the world. However I am aware that on occasion cutting back the enthusiastic branches of a shrubbery or hedge growth can give it real life. Revitalise it. Make fruitful the nourishment and resources it has for its development.

The sight of a rose bush or fruit tree after the operation can seem harsh. The plant bleeds sap as it is cut. So it gives the impression of being painful.

But as a result there is growth.

As a child I wanted to play centre forward for Manchester United. As a teenager I took a great interest in Heavy rock music. I dreamed of being popular with the girls. I wanted to wear the latest fashions. So I had a job on the market which used a few hours on a Wednesday, Friday, and all day Saturday. I approached my GCSE's or “O” levels with all this baggage.

So I was obliged to prune. To cut away at the enthusiastic branches of my life that were taking up time and energy.

If I demanded everything. I would end up with nothing.

But the pruning was painful and the local girls were all very disappointed!!!!

The life of a priest is ironically one which can attract a huge amount of activity. I was told by a wise old cleric that in our lives, work always finds more work. I work in a parish with two mass centres, two parish halls, and two houses. There is mass in both locations. Plenty of baptisms. Funerals which take time in preparation and expression. I am Governor to two junior schools, and support the local senior school with weekly visits. I help as best I can with our food Bank, or Larder. I try to arrange social gatherings, trips. I attempt with help to visit the sick. To read and prepare teaching. Above all else I try to find time for prayer.

Then I cook a mean chicken stew in the slow cooker, a great fish and rice combination, and simple roast chicken. I put the washing in the machine but don't iron it. I every year make a commitment to keep dishes out of the sink. I fill the soup maker with vegetables, and try efficiency, so that I return to the supermarket as little as possible.

I try to walk or run over the Lancashire or Yorkshire moors, as often as possible, and watch as much live sport as I can.

This at 65 years of age, is what I call my Peter Pan Existence.

So I am obliged on a regular basis to prune. To cut away at enthusiastic branches of my life.

If I attempt to do everything. I will end up doing nothing

But pruning is painful, and there is always more to be done.

I am not God.

You are not God.

Indeed all that will remain of you is love
Those thousand jobs you need to do, that remain undone because they are too much.

Indeed all that will remain of you is love
Those people you did not find the time to see
Indeed all that will remain of you is love
The miracle of spring you were going to witness, gone.
Indeed all that will remain of you is love
The decent meal you would prepare. The cloths you were to buy
Indeed all that will remain of you is love
The silence, or exhilaration of a trip not taken
Indeed all that will remain of you is love

I am not God.
You are not God.
If we attempt to do everything. We will end up doing nothing
But pruning is painful, and there is always more to be done.
Pruning is painful.
If we demand everything, we will end up with nothing
Pruning is painful
But with the guidance of God pruning can be extremely fruitful.
“It is to the glory of my Father that you should bear much fruit,
And then you will be my disciples”
It hurts but if you do not allow for pruning
You will dissipate all your energy’s
And do
Nothing

In any case
All that will remain of you is love.
In any case
All that will remain of you is love.