

22nd April 2020

Mourning

“A widow bird sat mourning for her love upon a wintry bough.”

Percy Bysshe Shelley, Charles the First

When both my mother and father died, we had big funerals for them, not extravagant or over-the-top, but not simple either. They deserved something special – as a fitting tribute to them and appropriate for our mourning. So, my heart breaks when I hear stories today of people who can't attend a funeral, or are one of only half-a-dozen mourners standing at a grave. No church; no packed crem; no play-list; no wake. Not extravagant, yet seeming far too simple to make much sense. What can I say in this awfulness, other than remind you there will still be folk around after this is over to love you and offer support in your mourning?

At the end of Act 1 of his opera *Madama Butterfly*, Puccini has Cio-Cio San (Butterfly) sing these tender words to her love, Lt B F Pinkerton:

*Love me with a little love,
a child-like love, the kind that suits me.*

Love me, please ...

*We are a people used to small, modest, quiet things,
to a tenderness gently caressing,
yet vast as the sky and as the waves of the sea.*

It's hard having to make do with "small, modest, quiet things" when we would like to offer what we might consider more fitting to our mourning. But as we find ourselves gently caressing our grief with our tears, can we be aware that our "child-like love" still points to a tribute "vast as the sky and as the waves of the sea"; that our "little love" is still part of something much, much bigger, and spread over years and years?

Maybe the love we offer in its simplicity *can* be special enough, so that it actually becomes for us "the kind that suits".

A prayer for today

Jesus said: "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted."

Dear God, please make that true. Amen

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