

Thought for the Day – Wednesday 30th June 2021

By Jill Howard-Gunasekera

Space in the margins

I've been really enjoying reading 'Soulful Nature – A Spiritual Field Guide' by Brian Draper and Howard Lewis.

Brian and Howard describe 12 walks they have done together over the course of a year, each chapter being a different month. Howard is a trained botanist and was a head teacher and Brian is a writer, and leads retreats. The lovely thing about the book is that both of them have written it, Howard's bits are in italics and Brian's are in ordinary font. And they really complement each other.

These thoughts about verges below I hope will spark you in your thoughts.

Howard:

"At the lay-by where we park, there is a sign: 'Wild Flower Verge, Hampshire County Council.' A glance at its website reveals that the Council has a joint scheme with Hampshire Wildlife trust to manage road verges for wildlife..."

Verges are often the only remaining semi natural habitat in a farmed or urban landscape. This means they have had no artificial inputs of pesticides or fertilisers and haven't been ploughed or re-seeded and can support a rich and varied range of plants.

Brian

And what of the verges of our lives, which may be more significant than we realise? It's tempting to make the outward appearance of life look trimmed and neat, controlled and presentable. Yes, the end result can be like a garden with such carefully manicured lawns that we're afraid to walk on the grass let alone allow kids to kick a football on it, or invite any wildlife in to make its home there once more. Some people like to have their religious beliefs perfectly arranged, too. Yet it's often on the blurrier edges of life that faith really flourishes if given the chance. If we are willing not to have everything we believe in its 'right' place, we can become open to the surprise of what might emerge, like the speckled beauty of wild summer flowers by a roadside.

May our faith be sometimes blurry enough to support the richness and variety of God's creation to flourish.