



Spiritual Reflection

- Father Alan Roberts



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ME TE WAI KŌRARI.

Like the nectar of the flax flower

Joy in small things



The harakeke/flax plant that grows around swamps throughout Aotearoa is much valued by Māori. In the summer months the Tūī love to come and dip their beaks into the sweet nectar within the colorful chalices on the branches. The whakataukāi (saying) above is a reminder from ancestral Māori to take notice of such beauty. Observe how nature provides. The beautiful singing of the Tūī completes the scene: a hymn of praise and thanksgiving we might say.

Noticing small things is without doubt the only way to begin transforming ourselves, be it as individuals or as a community. By appreciating the beauty of what nature presents we grow in our reverence for the planet and the people who live on it. Arguably, the problems we have with climate change have come about because we have failed to appreciate the natural order of things.

As I write we are in the last days of summer. A few days ago at the beach, I noticed the remains of a fire along with several cans and plastic bottles nearby. Unless they were gathered up the tide would soon take them out to sea. This is just a small act of neglect, but whether we set out to destroy or build what is achieved is the result of one small act at a time.

Vincetians have a primary commitment to help relieve suffering whether it's source be material, emotional or spiritual need. To do this, the harakeke plant is a great model. We offer sweet nectar in the form of listening, genuine caring and practical help for those who live with difficult issues. This help is given by way of one small act at a time. It is one way of fixing a broken world. Our hope is that those who benefit will, like the Tūi, join us in that great hymn of thanksgiving. Obviously though, we must ensure that the harakeke plant is a healthy one. The Tūi goes to the flower because they enjoy the sweetness that lies therein. Take this out and something beautiful disappears.

Discussion:

What does this article provoke within your thinking?

Prayer

Holy Spirit,
Give me the wisdom
To observe the workings of our Creator.
Help me become inwardly still
By letting go
Of all that distracts me -
The illusions and false promises -
So that I may become
One who offers
Sweet nectar
To fill the world
With song.