

## Building and un-building

The beech hedging in my garden is especially beautiful at the moment. As I have been standing at my sink, washing the dishes, I have been watching the activity in and around it with delight. There is a pair of blackbirds, busily building a nest in the hedge. Their determination, excitement and the rhythm of their activity has captured my imagination.



Building, building, building. They never seem to tire of building.

It is good to build. We learn from a young age how important it is to build friendships, communities and families. Indeed, to build trusting relationships with those we live and work with is actually vital to our mental and physical health. We also pick up that to build homes, careers, bank balances and social lives is important too. These things all have their place in our lives. However, it is very easy to be kept so busy building these routines and patterns that we can forget that there is also a time in our lives for unbuilding too.

In his story, 'The carpenter and the unbuilder,' David Greibner tells us of a carpenter who was so intent on building safe places on his journey to visit the King for a meal, that he forgot all about the journey itself. His need for structure and a security prevented him trusting which path to follow and consequently he never answered the King's simple and beautiful invitation. The King eventually sent an unbuilder who reminded the carpenter of the invitation. He told the carpenter that the King was waiting for him. The unbuilder patiently waited for the carpenter and supported him when he resumed his journey to the king. God's invitation to us all is to be people who know deep peace and love in our lives and the longing for the knowledge of this is written deeply in our hearts and souls. Yet our souls need gentle and loving attention and we can, in the whirlwind of our lives, forget to feed and nourish the seeds of possibility within us. We can forget to answer the invitation.

At these times we need to look for the unbuiders in our lives. They are there for all of us. They are the people who are sent to let us know that there is something very beautiful within and around us. That, as Elizabeth Barrett Browning said, 'Earth is crammed with heaven and every common bush afire with God.'

My youngest daughter was an unbuilder to me last night. I was very busy - sometimes my business is a high rise tower block of a building! – I am always doing, making, sorting, ironing, planning, marking, putting up, taking down etc - and she was in bed and obviously listening. She called me gently into her warm, dark room, held back her duvet cover and whispered, 'Mum, you need to relax now. Come on in.' I curled up in her little warm arms and she kissed my face and held me. In that moment my body relaxed and I knew that I needed to be right there in her arms. In her arms I was totally wrapped in God's exquisite love and peace. In the warmth of her touch I was reminded of a deep sense of freedom that stopping and letting go brings. This was a sacred moment.

My learning heart is beginning to become more aware of the many invitations to such sacramental moments in the very ordinariness of my daily life and the deep peace that they bring. The path to them is there for all of us if we can but see it. But, just like the unbuilder encouraged the carpenter, we need to make time to look. We need to 'unbuild' in a time of waiting until the sense of journeying wraps around us. Of not worrying too much about the right path but trust that, in the stillness of our hearts, the path will come to us.

