

Horse Chestnut Tree - Valerie



Sadly in our lives we can follow the wrong path which can cause great regret, pain and sadness to us and to those we have injured. Thirty years ago I was in great need of healing and it came to me through God's love expressed to me by the kindness and understanding of those I had hurt and also through the beauty of God's creation. I remember that it was early spring and every day in my stress and sadness, I would walk the same route under the Horse Chestnut trees which grew near our house. As I watched, the sticky buds on the trees grew fatter until they burst, and the tiny curled up leaves and blossoms emerged, gradually growing into their full beauty and, as the year moved on, the blossoms eventually turned into the green prickly cases that encased the growing conkers. As autumn approached, the green cases began to turn brown, until they finally dropped from the tree and lay on the ground looking shrivelled and rather ugly. But as I trod gently on a fallen case a beautiful shiny conker emerged.

It seemed to me during that awful year of my life, that the tree encompassed all the cycle of life, the swollen buds gave birth to the tiny leaves and blossoms which then expressed all the joy and exuberance of growth and youth. As adulthood approached the blossoms turned into the bright green cases which hung on the tree throughout the summer but, as autumn came and the days shortened, the leaves and cases began to lose their beauty and became dry and brown and finally died and fell from the tree. It led me that autumn, to realise that everything passes and God's forgiving love was made clear to me as I trod on the worn out husk and watched the beautiful shiny conker emerge, and so I wonder, isn't that perhaps what our souls look like to our loving God, when we finally leave our earthly body?