

My Story - Maria Higgins 8/4/14

Peace like a dove



Sometimes in the moment of a certain happening we recognise God's presence at a deeper level and the memory of such an encounter feeds us for eternity.

Such a moment is rekindled whenever I hear the cooing of a dove. This strangest of sounds transports me back in time to a broken down Norfolk cottage with its creaking stairs, lumpy beds and chipped unmatching plates where we stayed with our three small girls one late summer. On arrival, we approached the cottage from the rear and by crossing a tiny bridge, we entered the garden bordered by tall trees. It was then that the doves greeted us cooing loudly from their lofty shelter. And at that moment I felt God's presence filling me with peace as He welcomed me to this simple abode. I realised instantly that I'd been wrong. I'd been frustrated at having to book such a rundown cottage wanting to give the children something better which we couldn't afford, and yet here we were with God who was teaching me something new.

The large lawn at the back of the cottage belonged to the moles who allowed us to play cricket after the heat of the day. The sound of laughter, rising to the heavens and echoing down the years, remains imprinted in my soul, and springs to life whenever I hear the birds' cooing as I did back then. These days we live next to a wood and I am carried daily by the doves that live there back to that peaceful and rich time of beauty. Whatever life's ebbing tide brings as I move in and out of its many rhythms, whether I am riding a storm or bathing in its calm, I am reminded of His constant presence.

The tiny arms, legs and faces of our children have long gone, replaced by the young women they have become and one of them a mother now herself. As the three of them tumble out through the back door to join us in our garden, their laughter remains the same - a deeper tone, a slightly more mature giggle perhaps but essentially the same. And I recognise God anew.