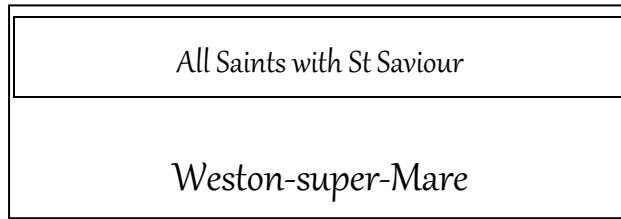




Arms of St Saviour



Arms of All Saints

18th February 2024

Dear Friends,

My theme in these Lenten reflections (of which there are four – there won't be one for Mothering Sunday) is the Tree of Life.

I invite you this Lent to consider trees, or perhaps a single tree; it may be a tree that is in your garden, or one that you can see from your window, or a tree that you walk past on your daily travels. I hope that particular tree will minister grace to you this Lent.

Sometimes, on solitary walks, I will stand beneath a great tree. I think of its roots beneath my feet; an intricate web anchored deep into the earth; a broad, expansive system, balancing the canopy above; its roots drawing water and nutrients, sustaining life, enabling growth and fruitfulness. I think of the trunk, strong, enduring; the hidden internal rings of the passing years; the life the trunk itself sustains, as insects feed in it and from it. And then the canopy; stark and mystical in winter; luxuriant in summer; glorious in autumn; full of promise in spring. A single tree to be with us during Lent.

I offer you the words of William Wordsworth from The Prelude.

But there's a Tree

A single tree

With sinuous trunk, boughs exquisitely wreathed,

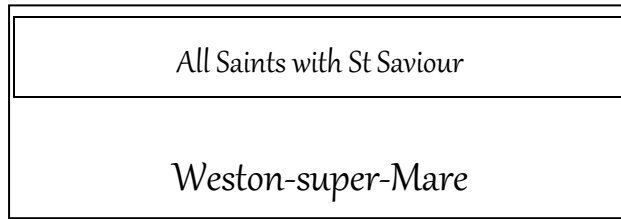
Grew there; an ash which Winter for himself

Decked as in pride, and with outlandish grace:

Up from the ground, and almost to the top,



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*The trunk and every master branch were green
With clustering ivy, and the lightsome twigs
And outer spray profusely tipped with seeds
That hung in yellow tassels, while the air
Stirred them, not voiceless. Often I have stood
Foot-bound up looking at this lovely tree
Beneath a frosty moon. The hemisphere
Of magic fiction, verse of mine perchance
May never tread; but scarcely Spenser's self
Could have more tranquil visions in his youth,
Or could more bright appearances create
Of human forms with superhuman powers,
Than I beheld loitering on calm clear nights
Alone, beneath this fairy work of earth.*

William Wordsworth, The Prelude VI, 76-94

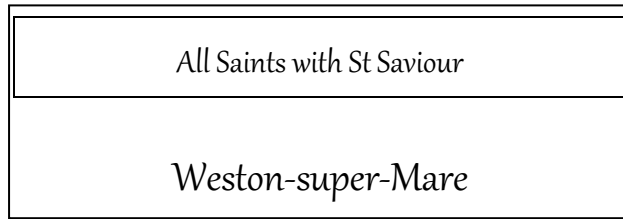
And here are the words of Psalm 1; the tree planted by the water; for Lent invites us to delight in the Law of the Lord; to meditate on that Law, day and night, to bring forth the fruits of righteousness, to be healthy and vigorous before God, rather than dry and withered. A tree by streams of water.

Psalm 1

*Blessed are they who have not walked in the counsel of the wicked:
nor lingered in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seat of the scornful.
Their delight is in the law of the Lord:
and they meditate on his law, day and night.
Like a tree planted by streams of water,*



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*bearing fruit in due season, with leaves that do not wither:
whatever they shall do, it shall prosper.*

(The Common Worship Psalter)

God our creator,

by your gift

the tree of life was set at the heart of the earthly paradise,
and the bread of life at the heart of your Church:

May we who have been nourished at your table on earth

be transformed by the glory of the Saviour's cross

and enjoy the delights of eternity;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Post Communion prayer for the Second Sunday before Lent

Fr Brendan