

Meditation- **COCOONED** - 5th April 2022

Several years ago I was an exhibitor in an exhibition, *LABYRINTHINE WORKS*, shown at Shepherds Dene. All the artists had made work, from paintings, prints, woodcarving to sculptures, which had been inspired by an engagement with labyrinths.

One of my pieces was entitled **COCOONED** and was based on the experience of walking the Shepherds Dene labyrinth carrying a large ball of gardener's twine!

As I walked very slowly, I let out the twine out, being aware of the ground beneath my feet, the vegetation that populated the labyrinth walls, the surrounding sounds, the feel of the air and the quality of the light.

As I progressed on my meditative walk I stopped sometimes to record, on small slips of paper, my thoughts, observations or feelings. I would then tape that note to the twine at the point where I had paused. The walk took a long time - unreeling the twine, recording and enjoying the quiet and above all, the experience of being on that path which had been laid out for me.

When I reached the labyrinth centre I paused and prayed and gave thanks - then began my slow walk out of the labyrinth, carefully rewinding the twine with its precious notes, the record of my experience.

When I emerged from the labyrinth, in one way, my journey was done.

I held in my hands an object which was not shaped like the neat large roll of twine which I carried into the labyrinth, the new object had become something that I described as a COCOON.

The COCOON was exhibited on a plinth, with a photo of it nearby and some words summarising the concept of the cocoon, the context of how it was made in the labyrinth and what it symbolised to me.



There were all my walking thoughts

And observations

Bound together, cocooned, in the twine.

But as in an insect cocoon,

Inside that structure,

All the components can be re-organised over time,

And a new body or "me" will emerge

In artistic terms, the journey continued as in my studio I carefully unwound the cocoon to re-examine the notes attached at the specific point on the twine at which I had stopped on my walk to record my observations or feelings. I was able to measure the position in centimetres at which each recording had been made. The notes and measurements formed another piece, a word and number piece which was printed and hung in one of the Shepherds Dene rooms.

From time to time I have pondered walking the labyrinth and the formation of that cocoon with its records contained within.

For me, the walk was a meditative act but also the birth of the cocoon. The cocoon may be a useful way to understand how life's experiences can be held within us and be used productively when the time is right to make changes and become a new person.

The reorganisation of the different elements which occur inside an insect cocoon (metamorphosis), for example that of a butterfly or moth, when the caterpillar pupates in a protective cocoon and from which, maybe weeks or months later, a new and beautiful form emerges, is miraculous.

So it can be for each of us when we hold our information or experience within a protective (and comforting) cocoon and with God's help and amazing creativity, a new "me" can emerge at an appropriate time and in the right conditions.

We become a fresh, new being carrying with us opportunities and promises for the future - the ugly and the painful have been done away with and a fresh beautiful form has emerged.

We know we must be patient and trust in God's plan for each of us. He holds us in a protective cocoon of His making, He holds the beautiful blueprint for our future and He brings His plan to fruition in His time not ours.

In Scripture we read:

Isaiah 43, 19

See, I am doing a new thing!

Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?

Isaiah 64, 8

Yet O Lord, you are our Father.

We are the clay, you are the potter;

We are all the work of your hand.

Isaiah 65, 17-18

Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth.

The former things will not be remembered,

Nor will they come to mind.

But be glad and rejoice for ever in what I will create...

Luke 2, 19

But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart

Romans 12, 2

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing (metamorphosis) of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Spirit of the Living God,

Fall afresh on me,

Spirit of the Living God,

Fall afresh on me.

Break me, melt me, mould me, fill me.

Spirit of the Living God,

Fall afresh on me.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p5JYgmsy7X4>

Ukraine

At this difficult time for the people of Ukraine, I know we will be keeping them, and the search for peace, in our hearts and prayers. Below is a work arranged by the composer John Rutter which may help us all to keep hoping and praying...

John Rutter and the Cambridge Singers

How can a composer respond to a global tragedy? The first thing I wanted to do was write some music that would respond in my own way. I hope the meaning of the text will resonate in people's hearts and reach out to the people of Ukraine in their hour of need. JR

A literal translation of the text is:

Lord, protect Ukraine.

Give us strength, faith, and hope, our Father.

Amen

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJI3kVwI2-U>