

Stop, look and listen

That used to be one of the little phrases taught to children to help them with crossing the road. It came back to me in a completely different context as I wrestled with what I could send as the thought for the day today.

Stephen and I have both had busy days – which seems the way of things even in lockdown. So, we postponed our walk – it seemed a good idea to enjoy the cool of the evening after we'd finished.

As we left home Steve asked me about today's prayers and thoughts – the prayers were done, thanks to contributors Maureen Noye and Brenda Cashell but the thought for the day eluded me. Every time I'd sought God during the day he didn't seem to be around.

So, as we strolled across the country park to the sea wall, I tried to work out what was going on. Usually the thought for the day is prompted by a word from someone, something on the news or in the paper – or just arrives, almost like an email.

We ambled [it really had been a busy day] and sat on a bench looking out across the river to the vast offshore windfarm in the Thames estuary in one direction and up the river to Creeksea and Canewdon in the other. There must be something in the energy on one side and the history on the other, my brain began to work harder but the breeze was cool and refreshing and it was very peaceful, just one or two people taking advantage of the cool of the evening like us.

Sitting on the bench, with time to just sit and enjoy the peace, the gentle sounds, the scents, the breeze and the sun on my face, I suddenly realised that while I'd been searching for God, he'd been quietly waiting for me to stop, look and listen, so that he could get a word in edgeways.

Stop being busy, look at the beauty around, and listen -- to the breeze, the snatches of conversation, the sailboard on the river.

Stop, look and listen – God is there all the while, we don't need to seek him out, he is everywhere. We just need to stop, look and listen to find that he is waiting to fill our souls with peace and our hearts with joy and our minds with calm. Everything we need.