

27th September 2009

A Fig Tree Parable

Early morning walking at this time of the year is a feast for the eyes and the nose! I have delighted these past couple of weeks in the colours and perfumes of spring. The yellow of kowhai, the pink of camellia and the reds of rhododendron, the white of plum, the purples of lavender and the soft perfume of jasmine and the occasional early rose. My senses are filled with colour and perfume. And beneath my feet the petals make a multicoloured carpet. As I pass Grey Lynn primary school on the Surrey Crescent ridge, the flame tree has one or two vibrant red flowers on the still bare branches. A promise of yet more colour to come. At the bottom of Dryden Street I hurried past another 'flame tree' massed with red against the stark bare branches. My head was down and my arms were pumping in preparation for the hill just around the corner. I felt full of spring energy and hopefulness as I picked up the pace of my walking and started uphill. I resolved to stop the next day and take time to appreciate the early vibrancy of this 'flame tree' in the valley. The following day I approached the flame tree in the valley with expectancy, and stopped prepared to look closely and appreciate its early abundance of stunning red flowers against still bare branches. There in the place of my flame tree was a bare **fig tree** with one or two new green leaves but with the blunt ends of its cut branches sporting shameless bright red fluorescent paint!

What my eyes had seen, my mind had interpreted in the light of my expectation. I wonder how often this happens? I am resolved now to pause long enough to really attend to what I see and hear-and not just on my morning walk!