



Llanthony Priory

## Out of Time

I did not stay this morning.

It is often refreshment enough to be where he has been.

Place can be important in spiritual life.

The highlight of most holidays is a visit to the remains of a monastery. Llanthony Priory in the Black Mountains, on the Welsh border, became a favourite retreat during my ministry in that area.

Time spent among the ruins is spiritual refreshment.

*'Time' and 'ruins'*. Neither word is fully applicable.

Time ceases here as sunlight eases ancient prayers from weathered stones and cherry blossom in Spring speaks of life which is eternal. Broken arches and protruding stones which once bore heavy oak beams may speak of material destruction, but faith is not ruined here. The air itself breathes divine presence.

Five hundred years ago men thought they had stripped these places of wealth and power, but there is a soul-wealth here and a constancy of Godly power. As the timeless solitude reaches into my being I hear chanting voices carried on the wind and feel the nearness of the one whom these faithful believers lived to praise in worship, work, and service to others.