

## Daniel's reflection for week Beginning 22nd January And did those feet . . .

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People dance for many reasons. We dance our joy, our freedom, our worship, our deepest loss. Recently, on an empty day, I went to see Billy Elliot again. At the end of his disastrous interview at the Royal School of Ballet, he was given a last chance. They asked him what he felt when he danced. 'It sort of feels good', he said. 'It starts stiff and that, but once I get going then I – like – forget everything and sort of disappear. Like I feel a change in my whole body. There's fire in me. I'm just there, flyin' like a bird, like electricity, yeah, like electricity.'

'When grace enters,' wrote W.H. Auden, 'humans must dance.' And when does grace enter? It enters, when, for instance, I make the choice each morning to live freely today rather than exist like a victim, to run the way of beauty rather than stumble along the blind way. When I begin to believe that God is always holding on to me, no matter what – I want to dance.

A kairos time and timing for dancing is when we begin, after many years, to live our unlived lives, so as to die without regret. We create a tiny dance floor when we hold off, even for a split second, these dark and deadly thoughts, allowing our souls a sliver of saving light. We can dance in that space because in it we have regained our blessed balance, our divine energy. This space may last the length of a human breath, but it hides and reveals the heart of redemption.

Something in all of us wants to dance when courage taps us on the shoulder, when the chains of fear and the baggage of false guilt fall from our shoulders. We want to dance when we feel a passion for the possible, when we hear the music of hope. And sometimes we dance when there's no alternative. An eighty-three-year-old woman once said: 'Life may not be the party we hoped for, but while we are here, we might as well dance.' The time to dance is now. Too often we think that it is only when our worries are over, our health is restored, our job is secure, the bills are paid, our relationships are back on track, our mind is at peace and our corns are pared that we can rejoice and dance. But we cannot put our lives on hold and wait for the perfect space and moment for dancing. Tomorrow is not always our dancing day.

The urge to dance and the urge to despair may be partners on the floor of our souls. Theologian Leonardo Boff believed that without our darkness as well as our light, our demons as well as our angels, our hearts will never truly dance. Writer Fr John Shea believes that: 'Life will always include suffering. When we spend all our energies in rejoicing only in those parts of our days that are painless, we will never enter into the dance of life because of too many unreal expectations.' There is no energy left for dancing when we are not living the life we love, but rather the life expected of us. 'We have fallen out of rhythm with the secret signature and light of our own nature', is how John O'Donohue puts it. 'We need to feel the soul's dream with the wonder of a child approaching a threshold of discovery. We come into rhythm with ourselves, and then gradually learn to dance

beautifully on this magnificent earth.' Albert Einstein holds that everything dances. 'Human beings, vegetables and cosmic dust,' he wrote, 'all dance to a mysterious tune intoned in the distance by an invisible player.' That invisible player is God. The early Church fathers used the word perichoresis to describe the gracious movement of mutuality between the persons of the Blessed Trinity in each person's soul. Richard Rohr calls it 'God's circle-dance of communion.' That dancing Trinity is within us all, beckoning us to join in. The invitation is echoed by Ronan Keating of Boyzone when he sings: Promise me that you'll give faith a fighting chance; And when you get the chance to sit it out or dance, – I hope you dance.

*(Treasured and Transformed pp 59,60,61 )*