

## Daniel's Reflection for Week Beginning 28th February Lent - Be Bold and Choose

Human thought and creativity have an astonishing power. It is God's imagination, the Christ-imagination, our imagination. They are all expressions of a divine presence. What amazing good news this is, especially at a time of widespread hopelessness. People are lost because they are disconnected from their souls' true spirit.

God created us, and became one of us for no other reason than to draw us towards transcendent shores of joy and peace and justice. These shores do not belong to heavenly landscapes. They are the shores on which we live – where terrorists strike, where recession hurts, where churches fail, where families collapse, where fear lives. In the face of the terrible evidence of a fallen humanity, new beginnings are still epiphanies of God's faithfulness and of human hope. A beginning is its own truth. It is always a blessing and always timeless. Nor does it need an ending.

Beginnings remind us that we are all magnificent possibilities in disguise. We sense their muted insistence. One day, if we are ever to unfold into our God-given destiny, we must listen to this inborn whisper.

Life's best teachers warn us against staying on the circumference of our lives too long, or we will never know either ourselves or God. They remind us that we all have a mystical call to journey forth and undergo great testing in order to save our soul, and save the world. That, too, is the vision of Jesus. It must not get lost in ecclesiastical translation.

When we set out to begin again, spiritual forces that we cannot even imagine are unleashed both to support us and to frighten us. Because this enterprise isn't just a head-journey alone; nor is it the pursuit of perfect external behaviour. It is much more. It is what Christians call metanoia – a going beyond the mind, a reconnecting with the divine, a confrontation with our demons of doubt.

That is why Carl Jung taught that such conversion requires patience, determination and boldness. It is a deliberate embracing of the darkness, of what he termed 'the night sea journey'. And this is an act of the purest courage. Theologian Martin Buber said: 'All spiritual journeys have a hidden destination of which the traveller is unaware.' Humble before mystery, R. S. Thomas agrees:

*I think that maybe  
I will be a little surer of being a little nearer.  
That's all. Eternity  
is in the understanding  
that that little is more than enough*

Given our congenital facility for getting lost, Buber believed we need teachers to negotiate the journey of the soul. These guides will come in all kinds of disguises, at the most propitious moments. There is 'the teacher within' as St Augustine reminded us, there is the anamchara (soul-mate) beside us, and there is the guardian angel above us. And all are the manifestations of the gracious mystery so utterly in love with us.

Too many die with their minds still shackled by a blinding, compulsive uniformity. Liberated thinking can transform the world. When you change the way you look at life, the life you are looking at will change too. 'Let a man in a garret but burn with enough intensity', de Saint Exupéry wrote, 'and he will set fire to the world.'

In Lent, many are ready for a radical shift in their lives and in their thinking. The start of every Lent calls for a moment of stillness. This moment will reveal the possibilities waiting painfully to emerge from the soil of our soul.