

Week beginning 24th August

God in the heart of the Cosmos and the Cosmos of the Heart

We were on our way back home after Benediction one bright night, many decades ago, my mother and myself, when she reached for my hand and suddenly stopped walking. 'Look up,' she said, 'Look up and listen.' I still remember it as a mystical moment. something inside us stands in amazement under the sky at night. There is a curious bond, a sacramental intimacy, between the universe of our heart and the heart of our universe, as they spin around each other in a web of wonder . . .

There was a hidden hint of theology and cosmology in my mother's remark that winter's evening. We sense the cosmic connections by heart. Pentecost is taking place whenever invisible mystery is becoming visible, whenever the unknown becomes accessible, when incarnate divinity lights up our soul. It is taking place wherever life moves on towards its final goal, wherever the evolving universe is unfolding towards its ultimate realisation, because it is the Holy Spirit that is facilitating and enabling that compelling attraction.

Theologian Karl Rahner deplores the poverty of our theology of the spirit, which deeply misunderstands its universal significance and primal potency. He reminds us that the Holy Spirit is revealed as the divine power in the deepest heart of each person and of this earthly world. This power is the graced centre of creation, divinely imbued with the evolving potential to reach its completion when God will be 'all in all'.

'And here the earth,' he writes, 'behind her continual development in space and time, sinks her root into the power of the all-mighty God ... his Spirit has already begun to transform the world into himself ... the new creation has already started, the new power of a transfigured earth is already being formed from the world's innermost heart.' . . .

Our mystics, physicists and theologians are combining to provide images of a vibrant, utterly free and unpredictable Holy Spirit that transcends our current and misleadingly limited understanding of its dynamic presence. St Augustine saw the totality of creation as a huge sponge immersed in a boundless sea, each tiny particle of it saturated with the ocean of the spirit. 'I set before the sight of my soul,' he wrote, 'the whole creation (stars, earth, air and mortal creatures); yea, and whatever we do not see ... And thee, o Lord, i imagined on every part environing and pervading it, though in every way infinite.' . . .

We strive for something more because deep in our hearts the Spirit lures us to do so. The restlessness within is a divine one, the fruit of the enlivening, energising and empowering Spirit, the same Spirit that blows where it wills and that never ceases to amaze and surprise us . . .

Pentecost reminds us that the Holy Spirit is a power at work in a continually renewed universe, and is present in the innermost mystery of all things. Grace and science come together to offer a fuller picture of what is true: that God's love is embodied in all humanity, and in the evolving world itself. The light that appears in Jesus is none other than that which had already shone forth in creation. Maybe my mother's silent wonder on that winter's evening in 1947 arose from a sense of being held by a Spirit of connecting, belonging and intimacy.

(Treasured and Transformed pp 153,154,155,156)