

Easteride 2011

Week 7 - The Mothering Landscape

This is the time of year when nature beckons to us, the high roads call to us, something stirs in our soul. Shades of Druidic customs awaken within Celtic hearts. On St. Patrick's day some years ago, I said Mass on top of the Paps. I was born and grew up in their shadow in the south-west of Ireland. The Paps are two breast-shaped mountains that dominate the skyline along the road that runs from Cork to Killarney. They are named in honour of the goddess Danu (Dha Chioch Danann) who reigned supreme across Europe in more peaceful times.

It was at the request of the local people that I celebrated the Eucharist on the Paps that spring morning, remembering how the light of Christianity and the shadow of paganism have chased each other delightedly down the centuries of worship. They still do . . .

Our Mass on the Paps stirred the unconscious memory of those who climbed the mountains that day. The pagan and Christian within all of us embraced again. Maybe our simple celebration that morning did something to heal and complete everything around us that was broken and unfinished.

Away to the west of us the Atlantic Ocean sang of God's vastness; to the east the Golden Vale of Munster reflected God's bounty. High overhead, wandering across the perfect sky, a little family of stray clouds was a sacrament of humanity's lonely pilgrimage in search of home. All of us, I'm sure, in that sacred space, were connecting with unspoken, unspeakable dimensions of our being.

And then I spoke the words of divine disclosure and universal revelation.: 'This is my Body'. Those words seemed to reverberate around the earth like the angels' Christmas song and to echo off the rim of the sun with transforming power. They were first whispered by our Creator when the world was brought to birth; again, when the Word became human, and now, a thousand times a day, when people around tables receive the 'sacrament of 'who they already are'. 'This is my Body.' It is God become atom, become galaxies, become universes, become earth, become flesh, become everything. It is too much for us to understand, too much to hold: how in wine and wafer, in imagination and faith, we could touch, for a fleeting but timeless moment, something of the mystery of life and death!

From 'Already Within, Divining the Hidden Spring', pp 43,44.