

2012 - 7thDecember 6. Angelus over Carron

This is my first day in Carron, Co Clare. Many years ago I explored some of the renowned wonders of the nearby Burren and was captivated by its quiet and strange atmosphere of power and beauty. But I had never heard of Carron. Just now I have walked the lonely, brooding road from Mooney's Perfumery back here to the hospitable home of Fr. John O'Donohue. May he rest in peace. Not even one human dwelling place could I see, only layer upon layer of endless, low silent slabs of ancient limestone. It was one of those still, eerie evenings when the vague fears set in, like the half-remembered nightfalls from childhood when we would suddenly run home as fast as our bare feet could carry us, not quite sure of why we were so frightened. And so it was with me now, in that threshold-moment, when thin shadows were hovering expectantly at the approach of autumn dusk.

And then, as though it had no source, and stronger than a tinkle and gentler than a peal, the Angelus rang, like a muted melody across the fields of Carron. The clear, quiet, full tones echoed off the hills and slid down the rocks; they pierced the twilight mist and flowed in waves all around me. It felt like a friend had come to greet me in my confusion, like a compass in the desert to direct and guide me. And my eyes were drawn to the first, strong evening star above me, pulsing its light with calm authority and a fierce confidence. Voices were conspiring to comfort me and then, carried by the sound of the bell, just before it became silent, these words were whispered into my anxious heart:

'You are not alone because I love you. Do not be afraid – because this land is safe. I have walked this road before you. I have looked under every stone and behind every tree. You are surrounded by a circle of protection, the Celtic caim of my compassion. That is why I became human like you – that you might not know fear. You cannot see them now, but the sky is full of angels. They protect your every move and they clear the air before every breath you breathe. They light your way; they guide your steps. Like Gabriel did, they announce my desire to make my home with you, to cherish and nourish everything that I, your divine Lover, ever made.

When you hear the Angelus bell, remember these things. I became like you so that all of you could become like me.'(Passion for the Possible p 32)