

2012 - 2nd November _ 1. We are God's Delight

After a lean and fairly barren period in the history of Christian thinking, a new dynamism is once again beginning to colour our understanding of revelation. The initial insight of the early Church Fathers is gradually being recaptured. Revelation is again seen as the amazing love-story of God's desire to be intimately among us in human form. Full of intense compassion, God wished to create out of pure love, and then, in time, to become that creation. That becoming happened in Jesus Christ. In him it was revealed that God's heart beats in all our hearts, that all our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, that every creature is a divine work of art. How different that is to the awful picture painted for us of the angry God in search of vengeance!

Revelation is now seen to be about the beauty of being human since humanity is the 'raw material', so to speak, of God's presence in the world. Revelation is about the unbelievable possibilities of humanity at its centre from the very beginning. It is about God's desire to be known and loved in the humanity of Jesus Christ. It is about God's delight in being visible and tangible in human form. This is how it became possible for God to be close to us, to share completely in the experiences of creatures, the fruit of God's own womb. We can say with saints and theologians from the time of Christ, that the incarnation happened not just because creation went wrong at some early stage, but because in God's plan to share God's own joy with others, creation was first necessary so that incarnation could take place.

Think of a married couple. Out of their mutual love they conceive a child into whom they will pour their deepest care and affection. The child is 'full' of its parents, grown from the seed of their love., nourished in the womb of the mother, bearing its parents' image, reflecting so much of their personalities. The child is 'a copy of its parents' to quote St. Paul. So, too, in this 'new' way of looking at the meaning of creation and incarnation, we are, so to speak, 'copies of the glorious body of Christ', a kind of rough draft of the shape of God. In the Office of Readings this very morning (Vol 3 p510) I came across the following gentle exhortation in a sermon of St. Leo the Great: 'O Christian heart, recognise the great worth of the wisdom that is yours, so that the creator may be shown forth in the creature and that, in the mirror of your heart, as in the lines of a portrait, the image of God may be reflected.' (Passion for the Possible p 16)