

Daniel's reflection for week-beginning 19th November - Eucharist and the Astonishing Revelation of Incarnation

Every event, no matter how profane or mundane it might seem, is a potential experience of God. In fact, the experience of God does not normally take place in religious ways and at sacred times, but in the material of the failures, difficulties, responsibility, fidelity, forgiveness of the human condition. Michael Skelley in *The Liturgy of the World: Karl Rahner's Theology of Worship* writes, 'The explicitly religious moments of our lives, experiences of the church's liturgy, for example, are necessary and important symbolic manifestations of the presence of God in all our moments. But they are just that; they are not the only times that God is present. We will be only able to recognise the presence of the absolute mystery in the liturgy if we first recognise its abiding presence throughout our whole lives and in all the world.' (*The Liturgy of the World* p83) After the resurrection, in the powerful experience of fellowship and community, the disciples indeed realised that Jesus, surrounded by sinners and outcasts, had given to the breaking of bread a new and universal meaning – eg for us, wherever in fact reconciliation and trust and hope for the future are happening. Since the Paschal mystery is really present in every attempt to relate and reconcile what is broken, to recover and discover the energy of love, to create and to grow in trust, then the human predicament itself is the central dynamism for the specifically ecclesial celebration of Eucharist.

Conscious of what has been achieved and revealed in Christ's death and resurrection, the Church carries the table of the world to the table of the Eucharist for its interpretation, purification, transformation and completion. It can do no less, 'for the partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ does nothing other than transform us into that which we consume.' The pattern of a true and loving humanity revealed in Jesus, is the only paradigm for our actions and attitudes. Because Jesus lived a human life, thought with a human mind, loved with a human heart and was tempted in his human condition (*Gaudium et Spes*, para 22), nothing, apart from deliberate, persistent and unrepentant destruction of love, is other than the raw material of the Eucharist.

Theologian Tissa Balasuriya in *The Eucharist and Human Liberation*, quotes from Tagore's *The Hidden God*:

Leave this singing and chanting and telling of beads.

Whom do you worship in this lonely dark corner of the temple with all the doors shut?

Open your eyes and see that God is not in front of you.

He is there where the farmer is tilling the hard ground and where the labourer is breaking stones.

He is with them in the sun and the rain and his garment is covered with dust.

Put off your holy cloak and, like him, come down on to the dusty soil.

Our master himself has joyfully taken on the bonds of creation; he is bound with us forever.

Come out of your private devotions and leave aside the incense.

What harm is there if your clothes become tattered and stained?

Meet him and stand by him in the toil and in the sweat of your brow.64