

5. Week Beginning 27th December Everyday Royalty

(On the occasion of a visit to Ripon by Prince Charles to Ripon, where I was parish priest at the time. When we met the Prince the Mayor of Ripon actually parented the Prince with a copy of the book from which this reflection is taken. “ Thank- you, “ he said to us, “but I don't have much time for reading these days.”

Prince Charles had come and gone. Our city shone that day of his visit . . . As I reflect on the careful preparations for our royal guests, I cannot help looking into my own hearts and wondering about how welcoming a place that is for the special princes and princesses of my own personal life . . . Do I know how to forget my own concerns so as to make space in my day and in my spirit for those who, by their love, have made me who I am today? . . . How often, I wonder, do we pause to celebrate those other royal stars of our lives who have never ceased to believe in us, who encourage and support us in our darkest times? These human angels have walked with us when we faltered, guided us when we were lost, lifted us when we fell. But we often forget to honour them, to pray for them. I adapted this poem by Tagore as a fifteen minute meditation for you to do. While reading it slowly, just let the video of your life play back to you those precious hearts and faces.

Soul-friends of my life, I re-member you by heart.
It was YOU, for instance, who made me laugh one long winter,
While it was YOU, patiently, who taught me how to play again.
Some of you visited me that Winter-year when no Spring came
And helped me find my soul.

And as you crossed my threshold, each one of you brought a special gift:
YOU discovered my weeping, inner child, and YOU,
my lost and precious power.
YOU told me I could sing again, and YOU taught me how to dance.
Because of YOU I can trust again and because of YOU my fears
are friendly now. YOU came in the early dawn, and YOU came in the night.
YOU brought the music into my room, and YOU, the lamp.

And now, with every passing year, dear stars of my life
And soul-friends of my heart, your names are uttered
By each summer flower, each autumn leaf.
I bless you with morning light and whisper ‘thank you’
as I fall asleep.

(Prism of Love pp 123,124)