

Daniel's Reflection for week beginning 14th October
-The Catholic-Christian Faith – told as a Love Story
If not in the Garden, then where and when did the Evil Seed take root?
(A suggestion!)

With the evolution into consciousness and free will and choice, the notion of survival, separation and selfhood brought the possibility, probability and reality of delusion, confusion, division and destruction. For these and many other reasons, this growing of the Earth into Heaven, this creating of a Community of Love (the Church, the sacraments) is proving more difficult than first imagined. It seems almost impossible to do. There are so many deep-seated distractions, so many dark forces, so much evil in this planet. There is an intrinsic and persistent stain water-marked into the pages of every human heart and community structures. And, many would say, into Creation itself. The perplexing questions continue as we reflect, on the one hand, on the Earth's beauty and, at the same time, the violence which is also seemingly inherent to it. We find the natural world so utterly alluring while we wonder about the brutality that seems built into evolution. There are depths of violence that characterise the human species, both in our own hearts as well as in governments, religions and communities. The 'sin of the world' (rather than any 'original' sin) is layered into our psyches; the human stain that disfigures all lives. Even the very communities gathered for spreading love, for nourishing the evolution of a spiritual people, are themselves falling foul of this ingrained distortion. The task is to find the broken connections again within our own selves, between people and nations, between all factions as we strive to re-member, renew and recreate around us the new earth and a new heaven, the new intimacy with God, revealed in the Incarnation. There is so much waking up and growing up to be achieved in this long and holy work. There is no easy answer. For too long we were fobbed off with an utterly flawed teaching about Adam and Eve. 'Such is the pernicious poison of so much indoctrination around original sin,' writes Diarmuid O'Murchu, 'its cultural and religious contamination, that it looks like it might take humans some time to get back on their feet and begin to reclaim the sacred earthiness that is endemic to all that we are, and all we are meant to become.' (97).

This existential struggle, this dance of shadow and shine, of demons and angels, even of a shocking propensity for evil, may, even in the light of the Incarnation, in an evolving humanity, may go on forever. Heaven is earth transformed when people struggle to live in love. Is the suffering of earth transformed into a foretaste of heaven when we live from a centre of love? Franciscan sister and scientist Ilia Delio believes that even in heaven those wounds of suffering will not be removed but will be transformed by divine love into new and eternal peace. Heaven is not a place of eternal rest, but a life of creativity and newness in love; we will be one with God in the continuing transformation of all Creation.

(From one of Fr. Daniel's unpublished papers 2018)