

## Daniel's reflection for week beginning 27th November Grace in Winter

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ourselves who prevent it from transforming us more truly into that image of God in which we were first created. God's gracious gifts surround us on every side. It is important to remember that grace does not only travel on fine days. On wintry evenings, especially, grace is never far away. Very often the greatest strides in holiness are made in the darker happenings of our lives . . .

Some people sense this exciting shift in the dynamic of grace with open wonder, joy and thanksgiving; others struggle with it . . . For many of us, nature and grace are seen as two distinct entities. The image of the world that this suggests is that of a two-storey house, where grace and nature are on separate levels, grace building on nature, but never really belonging to it or penetrating it. Today we are asked to make a 'paradigm shift' whereby the secular world is from the outset always encompassed and permeated with the grace of God's self-communication. God invites us, and every part of the cosmos, to enter into communion with the divine Self, according to its own capacity. 'The world is permeated by the grace of God . . . The world is constantly and ceaselessly possessed by grace for its innermost roots . . . Whether the world knows this or not.'(Karl Rahner) . . .

From the very beginning 13.7 billion years ago, the world was already permeated and filled with God's compassionate presence. There never was a time or space in the history of evolution when God was absent in the world. In the person of Christ this tremendous love-story has been finally revealed. The human is now the home of the divine. The redemption has happened. Salvation has taken place. What was begun in creation is completed in incarnation. The long-awaited healing has brought a stunning vision to human awareness. The search for God is no longer a dualistic journey outwards; it is recognition of what is already throbbing within us. That is what we celebrate in the sacraments. The immediacy of the eternal God keeps slipping our mind. It is divine power that energises our daily lives. Grace is life fully lived. God's basic gift to us is the lives we live and the good earth from which we make our living.

*(Passion for the Possible pp21,22)*