

## Daniel's reflection for week beginning 12th December – Growing in compassion

Friday was such a lovely day. After a few grey and cloudy weeks, the sun broke through, crisp and bright and full of promise-the promise of more to come, I've long and warm summer evenings. But winter too has its own beauty. The December light is different over the fields near Aberford, revealing the strange emptiness of the hedges and trees. Stripped of their green clothes, how poor and better they look; and all the floors are playing to be seen.

Only yesterday I was reading about flaws, about the scientific truth that it is only at its flawed point but the beauty of the crystal can grow. Is this true of people too I sometimes think it is only through the whole of our rooms that God pours in the grace?

*It is only when a tree has been stripped  
that we can see its true shape.  
Nothing can hide it.  
It is the same with ourselves.  
When we are stripped of all the flimsy things  
we use to hide our weakness  
Then all our warts and wounds appear.  
And thus it is that only when  
the unimportant slips away  
The naked beauty of our hearts  
Is there for all to see.*

Those who know their own sinfulness are often the most sensitive to the pain of others. Those who do not deny their own vulnerability are often the most forgiving of people. Stripped of all pride we can, with God's grace, become full of compassion ourselves.

May you all grow in compassion during these greatest advent days.

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*May I, in gratitude, offer you some gifts for the home of your heart:  
The gift of your beauty-you are carefully designed in the image of God so loveliness  
The gift of listening-when you listen without judging you mediate God's mercy  
The gift of tears (mainly for men)-may you experience the healing of expressed sorrow  
The gift of compassion-so that you will see all creatures as your sisters and brothers  
The gift of affection-are for many signs of friendship-words of praise, hugs, kisses  
The gift of vision-make you believe in the light even before the Dawn has yet come  
The gift of your child-may you discover in your child-the one in your home and the one in your  
heart-the ability to play again, to trust, to let go, to green  
The gift of yourself so that you will regain your self-confidence, your self-esteem, your true and your  
personal power. (ALL FREE!)*

(Both are extracts from parish bulletins, December '91, St Benedict's Garforth)