

## Daniel's Reflection for week beginning 3rd February –

### How Big A God Do We Believe In?

**In many of his writings Pope Francis is inviting us to transform our images of God. He has an affinity with the notion of 'magnanimity' and 'imagination'. The Christian God is the creative Mother of everything that lives. How big, how utterly free do we allow that God to be?**

'God appears as an artist whose concerns transcend the values of economy and pragmatism and whose signature is a beauty that is both tender and awesome. God the Creator is the divine artist who brings forth a world that is fit to open the human spirit to beauty, goodness and love – in short, to values that move beyond everyday usefulness. And for the eye of faith, the world which God is now fashioning is truly a window to the divine. The cosmos as seen through the lens of modern science need not be a threat to belief in God. But such a vision of the world, does, indeed, confront us with a question of great importance: How big a God do we believe in? It certainly gives reason to reflect on the creative artistry of the Creator.'<sup>71</sup>

This 'big' God wants us to be big also. It is why Incarnation happened – so that we could realise the size of our souls, the artistry of our being. It is a huge breakthrough for us when we begin to realise that what empowers us, breaks open for us the presence of God in the most ordinary events and experiences, is a truly sacramental moment. Jesus' intense presence to nature in the fields of his mission was an act of worship before the creative imagination of his Father. And the artists around us play a central part in removing the veil that conceals the incarnate light 'in the beauty around us.' They hold the key to unlocking the corridors of connection between the 'in-scape', the 'interiority', the inner core of things – and the experience of God's own self. (LS 97)

In his Letter to Artists (1999) Pope John Paul II wrote, 'None can sense more deeply than you artists, ingenious creators of beauty that you are, something of the pathos with which God at the dawn of creation looked upon the work of his hands. A glimmer of that feeling has shone so often in your eyes when – like the artists of every age – captivated by the hidden power of sounds and words, colours and shapes, you have admired the work of your inspiration, sensing in it some echo of the mystery of creation with which God, the sole creator of all things, has wished to associate you ... With loving regard, the divine Artist passes on to the human artist a spark of his own surpassing wisdom, calling him to share in his creative power.'

The Pope went on to emphasise that 'Every genuine art form in its way – from writers, painters, sculptors, poets, film-makers, playwrights, composers, architects, musicians, actors – is a path to the inmost reality of man and of the world ... That is why [the Incarnation] of truth was bound from the beginning to stir the interest of artists, who by their very nature are alert to every epiphany of the inner beauty of things.' Each work of art, he said, 'which explores the everyday, the darkest depth of the soul', is 'an appeal to mystery', a 'genuine source of theology', a 'moment of grace', 'a kind of sacrament making present the Incarnation in one or other of its aspects.'

(An Astonishing Secret pp117, 118)