

Week Beginning 11th January 2015

Listen to Your Body

Did you know that your body is the wisest part of you; that it can only tell the truth and remembers everything? . . . It is God's masterpiece – the divine work of art. It is only through the body that God's best secrets are revealed . . . God delights in being visible and tangible in human skin. The Blessed Trinity dwells deep within our bodies. . .

But somehow we have spiritualised beyond recognition, as though the incarnation had never happened, the unique, vital and essential role of the body in our salvation; we have theorised it to a safe distance from God-given passions of flesh and blood to a place where it can be held under complete control. Somewhere along the way we have thrown away the body-clock that brings God's work to full time. . .

Many of us, who were brought up in a Catholic environment some decades ago, were subjected to terrible stories and explanations about original sin and about our bodies with their devilish tricks for leading us into sin . . . And so to travel lightly and joyfully on the journey ahead, with all our energies flowing in balance, with body, mind and spirit dancing in rhythm and singing in tune, most of us need a conversion so as to enjoy our bodies. . .

True self-love, and only then the love of our neighbour, comes about when we develop and honour the feeling capacity. When we begin to believe that the body is in the soul rather than the soul in the body, and when we come alive to our senses and to our skin, and see them as guides and transmitters of energy and grace, our whole lives can be transformed.

And God said:

May you delight in your body.

It is my body too.

May you see the world anew each day:

how else can I behold my beauty?

May you fill the earth the sounds of life:

how else can I hear my song?

May your skin rejoice in the passion of the sun:

and your tongue tingle with the joy of new wine.

Don't you know you are my senses? Without your body I cannot be. (Travelling Light pp29,20)

Follow-up -

If you would like to deepen your body-awareness, try this simple daily praxis: Sit down for a few minutes and relax. Pay attention to your breathing. Then try to become more aware of your body. Notice the sensations in its different parts. Can you experience your feet inside your shoes, your clothes inside your skin, your back against the chair? Is your jaw locked tight? Which parts can you feel at this very moment? Can you tell how your body is affected by your feelings of stress, anxiety or anger? Throughout the day and the next few days gently bring your mind back to your body along these lines. Gradually you will notice a new relaxation and ease about you. You will sit, stand, move and breathe with more grace, confidence and vitality.