

Daniel's Reflection for Week beginning 3rd April Lost and Found

The feelings of fear and abandonment that beset so many when they lose sight of the divine light within themselves are swept away by Easter's homecoming and are transformed.

Weary with work, with worry, and indeed with the world, Yvonne was weeping at the coffee table. 'All I want,' she repeated, 'is to come home – to myself.' She had been dragged from her heart-centre by responsibility and anxiety; she was out of her true element. She longed to belong again – to herself.

After a terrible time of temptation and despair, of intense conflict on Holy Saturday, Jesus shone with his own eternal essence on Easter morning. Utterly abandoned a few hours before, he was now guided safely home to the fullness of his being.

Yvonne had temporarily lost her star – but her star had not lost her. Somewhere within her she never doubted that. She had always believed in some kind of invincible light within her darkness. This light was her innermost essence. It shone from Jesus at the Transfiguration. It shone again when he walked from the tomb. And it shines from us too when we leave the lost places of our lives to find the only love we feel at home in.

They start early in our lives – the feelings of being lost and found. And they stay all our life. I remember in the black nights of angry storms, the pale, smiling face of my mother behind the small candle. 'Shh, my love. It's all right. Mummy's here.' Then my fears would leave me. The dawn always arrived to find me safe at home. When a frightened Jesus was distraught in the garden he, too, needed the human touch of his forgetful friends – someone to hold him and breathe brave love back into his faltering heart. He needed to hear his name whispered by those sleepy men, to be tenderly told who he was. As he stumbled around alone, already bleeding with fear, waiting for those who would soon kill him, maybe he was remembering those nights when he cried out, a small uncertain child, and his mother's calm face comforting his frightened soul, unknowingly preparing him for this dark moment. In *A Tree Full of Angels*, Macrina Wiederkehr OSB writes: 'That's you! You fragile, noble being. Little-great-one. Yes, there are whispers of greatness in the frail envelope of your being.'

The perennial rituals of Holy Week – the washing of feet, the kissing of the Cross, the soul-stirring 'exultet' – are not there to be celebrated as ends in themselves: the whole Passover experience is for the grounding and anchoring of us during the pain and passion of our lives, for our coming home to the wonder and challenge of our true identity in God. This is our hidden self revealed; the whole point of Creation, incarnation and Church fulfilled in us. Before this transformation happens, many tears will fall along the way.

Richard Rohr OFM reminds us that St Francis embraced the leper on the road and tamed the wolf in Gubbio. But it is on the inside that our personal lepers and wolves must first be found and tamed. Until our divided self first makes friends with our own leprosy and wolves – the liar, the hypocrite, the coward within – there will be no peace around us. Our homecoming demands the greeting and forgiving of our demons too.

This process of our purification and transformation will take us up a mountain to a cross. This is a hard dying. And we need to be prepared for it. The only way to stay climbing that mountain of our own Good Friday is to allow God lovingly to support us with a passion. As it was for Jesus, it is the way of blind trust in unconditional love. St Elizabeth of the Trinity heard God's whisper, 'Just let me love and hold you! Let me take you home.'

(*Treasured and Transformed* pp103-104)