

## Daniel's Reflection for week beginning 6th August The Meaning of Incarnation

God desires to become human so as to be available and accessible to us. God's choice is to desire to become human so as to be effective among us, so as to be the incarnate healer among us. There is therefore a need to rediscover the human, the body, the senses as the true incarnate presence of God. This is the central divine way, as Jesus explained to St Teresa, in which God can be intimate with us.

John V Taylor tells the story about a West Indian woman in a London flat who was told of her husband's death in a street accident. The shock of grief stunned her like a blow; she sank into the corner of a sofa and sat there rigid and unhearing. Then the schoolteacher of one of her children, an English woman called, and seeing how things were, went and sat beside her. Without a word she threw an arm around the tight shoulders, clasping them with her full strength. The white cheek was thrust tightly against the brown. And then, as the unrelenting pain seeped through her, the West Indian woman began to sob, the tears of relief falling on their clasped hands. This is the embrace of God, God's kiss of life.

We do not heal people by our words, advice, techniques, impersonal and at a distance. We draw close to them in our own reality, in our own authentic pain and hope. THAT is what allows healing to happen. We are a kind of midwife to one another's health. The Spirit of God in each of us wakes up the Spirit of God in the other. It's all about presence.

This real presence is not something we make, or create, or put on. It is what we become when we strip away all that is inauthentic about us, when we grow into the mind of Christ, purifying the posturing, the pretence and masks we wear, when we learn to tell the truth and notice the lies in our lives - and then our very human presence will shine with the Spirit power. (Jn 14, 12).

The moments when we give flesh to the Presence; when love is enfleshed again, when miniincarnations happen, and another epiphany of incarnate Presence is revealed. As with Jesus something goes out from us – something is caught from us.

It can be something as ordinary (as above) when we try to comfort someone. When we simply offer our presence to another something starts to heal and strengthen. There is a moment when this happens, when a new little incarnation is created, when infinite Presence takes human form, when heaven is revealed on earth, when redemption happens again – do you ever feel that? Can you think of examples when this happened to you?

(Notes from a talk given to Hospital and School Chaplains, 2012)