

## Daniel's reflection for week beginning 24th June - The Holy Spirit is the midwife of our inner beauty

**The Spirit of God has filled the universe with possibilities and therefore, from the very heart of things, something new can always emerge: 'Nature is none other than a certain kind of art, God's art, impressed upon things, whereby those things are moved to a determinate end. It is as if a shipbuilder were able to give timbers the wherewithal to move themselves to take the form of a ship.'** (*St Thomas Aquinas*) [LS 80]

There are huge questions here that explore and examine our understanding of God as Creator of the world. These debates may be new to many. Whole dimensions of an incarnate faith are emerging for future theological, scientific and spiritual developing and growing. There will be fascinating and utterly new and unforeseen vistas and visions unseen up to now – for those with the courage and trust to 'launch into the deep' as St Pope John Paul II predicted.

One particular issue, especially for Catholic Christians, is that of the process of evolution on the one hand, and the guiding presence of the divine Creator on the other. In the light of evolutionary reality, how can God still be the Creator of all things? When we reflect on the random nature of evolutionary development, with its hits and misses, its innumerable cul-de-sacs and variations, where can we point to the steady, accurate, guiding hand of God as we could definitively do before? How can both seemingly irreconcilable forces and drives be seamlessly combined? We can only seek, reflect, read and meditate on such wonderful mysteries and truths. The good news is, for those who are serious and dedicated, that there are many writings and presentations that help us enormously when we come with open welcoming minds, eager to make intellectual sense of our faith.

In 2014 Pope Francis offered clarification at the Plenary Session of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences. 'When we read in Genesis the account of Creation,' he said, 'we risk imagining God as a magus [wizard], with a magic wand able to make everything. But it is not so. He created beings and allowed them to develop according to the internal laws that he gave to each one, so that they were able to develop and arrive at their own fullness of being. He gave autonomy to the beings of the Universe at the same time at which he assured them of his continuous presence, giving being to every reality. And so creation continued for centuries and centuries, millennia and millennia, until it became that which we know today, precisely because God is not a demiurge of a conjurer, but the Creator who gives being to all things.'

The beginning of the world is not the work of chaos that owes its origin to another, but derives directly from a supreme Origin that creates out of love. The Big Bang, which nowadays is posited as the origin of the world, does not contradict the divine act of creating, but rather requires it. The evolution of nature does not contrast with the notion of Creation, as evolution presupposes the creation of beings that evolve.' . . .

To be Christian is to be in evolution; and to be in evolution is, in the guiding words of another safe teacher, Ilia Delio, 'to live from the centre of the heart and to reach out to the world with faith, hope and trust in God's incarnate presence . . . The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the living word of God that continues to be spoken as the word of evolution . . .'. God creates and saves, you might say, through evolution. Delio writes of the shining of God coming through Creation, 'always radiating through a world that is gradually becoming transparent'. It is important that we understand that the Incarnation is not a one-off event in history: it holds the key to the true reality of all time and space, of all life

and its religions, as it evolves and grows towards final fulfilment in the heart of God. It is, in fact, a long love story drawing us to cherish and transform our true earthly and cosmic home. In *Waiting for God* French philosopher Simone Weil wrote that 'the beauty of the world is Christ's tender smile for us coming through matter ... It is like a sacrament.' So, dear reader, do not give up! Let nothing distract you from pursuing the true meaning of your life. The most eternal love-stories are never immediately obvious.'

(*An Astonishing Secret* pp 85-86)

