

### Week Beginning 17th March Naturally Blessed

As priests what are we doing when we bless? Are we actually making something holy, adding on something that was missing, spiritually disinfecting a merely natural object? Or are we revealing hidden richness, divining a wellspring of sacred presence, already secure below the surface of everything? Is that not the true meaning of Incarnation?

Is consecrated ground more sacred than the kitchen floor burnished and blessed by the feet of the families who played and prayed on it? We take our shoes off because all ground is holy. We bless the land to reveal that every bush is a burning bush. Is the still water in the church font holier than the dancing water in the stream nearby? We bless water to invoke, enhance and reveal its ageless, unique and beautiful healing power.

Everyone can bless. It comes with our already-graced humanity. There are people who can be called sacraments of blessing. There are those whose hands, eyes and bodies are always like that . . . Friends (and enemies) probably have no idea of the eternal effect they have on each other. There is a memory in every blessing that remains hidden in the warp and weft of our souls. Fresh within me is the Celtic blessing my mother left on my pillow the night before I left home for the first time:

Be thine the encompassing of the God of life;  
Be thine the encompassing of the Christ of love;  
Be thine the encompassing of the Spirit of grace;  
To befriend thee and to aid thee,  
O Donal, beloved of my breast:  
To befriend thee and to aid thee,  
Thou beloved of my heart.

(Unmasking God pp100, 101)