

### Ninth Set of Reflections - The Nearness of God

So much is written these days about Celtic spirituality. Beyond the doubts and arguments concerning the precise meaning of the term it is safe enough to say that within this fine tradition the presence of God, for most Celts, was a very tangible and daily experience. The secret of a radical renewal for today's churches lies in the proclamation of that good news. Beyond miracles and wonders, beyond fundamentalism and dualistic evangelism, beyond an authoritarian discipline and last-ditch effort to anchor a drifting institution, it is in the revelation and celebration of the sacredness of every moment and movement of human life that the churches and the world will be saved. The mystics and poets, of course, always had it. It is in the 'isness' of things that God is found. God is 'pure being' according to Thomas Aquinas, and Jesus is the one who, in his humanity, revealed that truth.

Jesus purifies us and liberates us into the awareness that the presence of God is revealed in the essence of everything; that all creation, everything that is in the heavens and on the earth, is penetrated with interconnectedness, according to Hildegard of Bingen, penetrated with relatedness, and is already full of grace and blessing. Like a sudden dawn that makes sense of shadowy outlines, revealing the beauty, symmetry and sheer delight of vast landscapes, so too, the understanding and the most amazing ways. One of these amazing ways is the conviction that all our truly loving emotions carry the fullness of God's essential being. This conviction is a huge threat to many Catholics, Yet no less a traditionalist than St Augustine held that, 'the love with which we love each other is the very same love as that which God loves us.' It is in this sense that we redeem each other when we love each other. (Lost Soul pp103,104)