

## Daniel's Reflection for week beginning 11th November –

I hope you did not find our last few Weekly Reflections too difficult. We have spent decades exploring the personal transformation that happens when we apply the implications of Incarnation to our personal lives and loves. But without embracing the whole achievement and mystery of Creation and Evolution like we are trying to do, we will never understand the full wonder and graced magic of a fleshed God. So please have another go at making all this work and play central to your life. 'If we do not try to understand Creation and Evolution in its beauty, if we do not 'get it right,' as St Thomas Aquinas said, 'then we will never understand God.' The Energy called God: the Evolution called the Holy Spirit is an unpublished paper of mine, offered in six parts. Part 3 this week. (Spring 2018.) *Daniel O'Leary*

### Part 3. Only Connect

What happens to our faith when we shift the locus of God from the private sanctuary of our routine worship into the raging, desperate realities of a speeding, spinning, graced and sinful world? How differently will we go to Mass, or kneel before the Blessed Sacrament, or begin the Creed, when the God we believe in is in no way confined to churches or religions, except in so far as these institutions, at their best, are necessary for pointing towards, reminding us of, and cleansing the lens of our souls, so as to continue, even more intensely, to keep recognising the broken, battered, shining, beautiful face of God in everyone, in everything, everywhere?

At this point there will be readers, especially Catholics, who will ask what the fuss is about. Haven't we always, at least to some extent, believed this? Did we not learn about the omni-presence of God, in nature, in Jesus, in the Church, in the first page of the Penny Catechism? End of story. Yes, we did. Many of us know these things. But there is knowing and knowing. We know these truths but do we connect them? Do we ever really ponder on the huge meaning and mystery involved? The two categories of the presence/experience of God that we are discussing ie in the so-called 'godless', 'unspiritual' dimensions of ordinary, everyday life in humanity/nature, and the more externally observed practices of religious rites, are intimately intertwined. Yet we do not recognise the divine in the human. We do not, in fact, make the connections. Christian Incarnation, the Church, the sacraments are meant to do that, again and again to penetrate the disguise, to reveal the depth of mystery in the phenomenon of 'ordinary' life itself. That is why Christians are Christian – they believe that their God can only be glimpsed, experienced, adored, in every passing moment of their life, in every person they encounter, 'in the least speck of dust in the planet' as Pope Francis put it in his encyclical 'Laudato Si'.

To some extent we believe all of this, but, maybe because we are so busy, or we have not been encouraged to meditate on such matters, it still remains only a kind of guess, a hunch, a suspicion that in our very lives lies our divinity. We still imagine a God or Higher Power who is 'out there'. Yet incarnate divinity is in the core of our essence, the energy of our senses, the breath we breathe and the heart-beat we throb to. It burns in our relationships, our creativity, our battles with pain. As long as we settle for a difference in these two experiences we miss the core meaning of Incarnation. We forget, or maybe were never told, that for the Christian, God has no other way of being experienced by us. Only connect! Wisdom, one might say, is connected knowledge, a knowledge that is laced with the holding-glue of incarnate love.

And that is why, when we do actually grow more securely into this profound sacramental vision of things – a vision that was first implanted in the divine act of creation, and confirmed, established and revealed once for all in the Incarnation - it can truly be called a life-changing paradigm shift. After the eradication of the persistent and divisive dualism that makes this vision so difficult, a new light shines invincibly through. That light, according to Christians, is the Holy Spirit. The shimmering we see in the first snowdrop, in the first gasp of the baby, in the slithering snake pursuing its prey, in the mystery of suffering, in tomorrow's discovery of a distant, life-filled planet, is the sublime artistry of the beautiful, infinite and elegant animator and mother that we call God.