

Daniel's reflection for week beginning 12th September

Only one love

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We forget that the world is the body of God, that, as the poets remember, eternity is caught in the most commonplace moment, infinity in a gesture and divinity in every aspiration of the human heart. Without the fact of the enfleshing of the Word, no poet or mystic could hold, with absolute certainty, what the Hebrew authors glimpsed – that every drop of water, every grain of sand, every leaf, every feeling are all small sacraments of divinity. So important and holy is the 'being' of things, the 'isness' and 'inscape' of things, the life-breath of any creature, the heartbeat of the tiniest insect, that to become one with it, is to become one with god. We listen to the anonymous mystic-author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*: 'if you look at god in the perspective of eternity,' he writes, 'there is no name you can give him – nor is there any experience or understanding – which is more fitting than that which is contained in the blind and lovely beholding of the word is.' Above all, when we struggle to love as truly as we can, then, especially, is when we are held in mystery. (Mystery being, not an impossible puzzle, but the context and unfathomable backdrop, the infinite horizon to all our human searching and loving.) So when we stop thinking distracting thoughts, when we are attentive to the present moment and to all that is going on all around us, when we trust in the 'now', letting go of everything that is not in that 'now', then, to my mind, we are sensing the liberating reality of god. The mystics describe this kind of attention as something like the way people in love gaze in silence at each other and are privileged to enter some reserved inner sanctum, out of bounds to all but the lover. When people are gifted with this mutual loving, there is a deeper mystery present. The revelation of the incarnation is not about a third element in this relationship, as though God's love was another dimension to be included in the equation. Any form of human loving is impossible without God; the more purified and authentic it is, the more completely it can be identified with divine love. It was, after all, in Jesus' sensitive human presence to his relationships, in his attentive struggles with them, in all his human loveableness, in his attractiveness as a deeply caring human being, that God's essence was revealed, and that the church community was founded. It was in the warmth of his smile, the look in his eyes, the magnetism of his awareness of people's guilt and fear, that God wished to be accessible to the world. For the Christian, there is no other way to experience and worship the sacred, human heart of God (1 Jn 1:1–6). . .

In the prologue to his gospel, John reminds us that Love has always been incarnate. This story of the continual unfolding of God's love for us is true of everything from the personal details of our own painful, joyful, inner and outer journeys to the currently stunning revelations of the mysteries of the cosmos. .

Treasured and Transformed