

## Daniel's Reflection for week beginning 13th August Presence and the Senses

You cannot manufacture God's incarnate Presence – you allow it to reveal itself in your stillness, in your breathing, in the mindful way you look, listen, touch and do what you do. You become Presence – the fleshed Presence of God.

The role of the body in revealing Presence is central; the graciousness of your eyes – windows out and windows in; the touch of your hands – extensions of your heart; your body – the dignity of composure. Your body betrays the inner state of your soul, the dignity of your voice, a radiance from your physical presence, a reverence for the Presence of the other. Then you release a healing Presence in the other. That is the key. We do not give inner health – we awaken it in others.

The moment of being with someone struggling may be less a sense of giving, more of releasing; less a sense of telling, more of liberating; less a sense of providing help, more of awakening; less a sense of adding to, more of transforming through self-realisation, through a mutual surrender into the Holy Spirit of God.

Yet thankfully, Presence does not depend on our perfection, our sinlessness, our goodness, our religion. It is free gift – always available to everyone. All we have to do is to stop blocking it! Presence is always there, always given, always incarnate, at every moment, for those who are present to themselves. Presence, in the end, is pure, unearned gift. All God is saying is: 'Just let me love you! Let my healing love flow to others through you.'

Ultimately, our true presence is the fleshed-out presence of God. God is not out there anymore. We believe in the incarnate God. (You will never become a mystic if you still believe in a God outside you. You cannot live in the Presence, if the Presence you believe in is out there.) Instead it is in here in our hearts. The Blessed Trinity dwells within all of us. But how to become and to BE that PRESENCE.

To stop being superficial – to explore the resonance of our lives. We are called to become deeply compassionate, gentle, tender, in the mystery of our humanity. Try to be aware of any harshness, insensitivity, blaming, cynicism in your make-up. Fear, resentment, ego, refusal to forgive - all are huge blockages to the flow of an extravagant love. Our wonderful work of healing requires a profound surrender to God's love, and a passionate commitment and total dedication to those you serve. Nothing less will do for those in distress

(Notes from a talk given to Hospital and School Chaplains, 2012)