

Daniel's reflection for week beginning 20th November

The Really Real

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The amazing insight we grapple with today is about the humanity of God, the focus of the real presence of Jesus in our world, the intimate movement of the indwelling Spirit within our most secret and often ambiguous desires. A creation spirituality struggles to identify the authentic presence of God in the emerging experiences of everyone. Whether trivial or important, whether about disappointments or achievements, whether about fear, hope or pain – in these places we find what Hugh Lavery called 'the really real'.

When are we most ourselves, most honest, most free from masks and pretence, most off our perennial guard and out of hiding? Is it when we are at home, at work, at play? Is it when we're ill, at prayer, in bed? When and to whom do we reveal our most real concerns? Could it not happen, for instance, in a most sublime manner, at those fleeting or ordinary or one-off moments like the casual sharing with a trusted friend – or maybe even with a friendly stranger?

What I'm trying to identify here, is the locus or address of the truest reality of the human spirit. Having explored that, I'm then trying to emphasise that here, too, is the holiest experience of the divine. . .

God is in 'the bits and pieces' of each day, as the Irish poet Patrick Kavanagh puts it, even in the ones that seem furthest from heaven. To believe this is an immense challenge. Why would God want to be present in such 'ordinary' moments? But if we have the courage and patience to look, we may be surprised to find a God we could never hope for or imagine.

According to Karl Rahner, each moment of our lives is like a grain of sand lying alongside the ocean of mystery. Every event, no matter how profane or mundane it might seem, is a potential experience of God. In fact, the experience of God does not normally take place in religious ways and at sacred times, but in the material of the failures, difficulties, responsibility, fidelity, forgiveness of the human condition

(Passion for the Possible pp 263,264,265)