

**Daniel's reflection for week beginning 7th August Season of our Content**  
*There are certain threshold moments when we sense something of the destiny to which we are called . . .*

I experienced such a moment during the Golden Jubilee celebrations of my ordination. I suddenly saw it all as a sacramental threshold of my life, a gathering up of its bits and pieces, a celebration with those people who had shaped and enriched it, a pause to glimpse below the surface of decades of work and relationships.

All jubilees have elements of such profound realities, but the 'golden' one has a special depth, almost a finality to it. It is not quite like the final summation of the requiem eulogy, but it has similarities, a kind of concluding 'This is Your Life.' Reflecting afterwards on the celebrations, my friend Gerry said: 'In a way, last night's songs and stories were like a funeral – only the corpse was alive!'

I can only guess at what fills the hearts of couples at their golden wedding anniversary. Their past is vividly before them when the whole family gathers to celebrate. Their spouses, their children and their grandchildren are the very essence of their lives. The room is filled with faces of delight, with the vibrancy of wordless validation. For me it had to be a little different. But many of the friends who had made me who I am, who loved and forgave me, who believed in me, were there like angels of my life – a living album of memories, an evening of unutterable gratitude.

Sean, our musician that night, quoted Albert Schweitzer:

'One thing stirs within me when I look back on my life; it is the fact that so many people meant so much to me without knowing it. They entered into my life and became spiritual power within me ... if we had before us those who have thus been a blessing to us, they would be amazed to learn what passed from their lives to ours.' In a moving and profoundly honest reflection on the occasion of his own golden jubilee, moral theologian Dr Kevin Kelly quotes his friend Peter Harvey: 'I am either one with all Creation, linked indivisibly with everyone and everything else, or I am nothing but an illusion. It is not that I exist only in relationship; it is that I am relationship from the beginning. At no point can I step outside the web, for there is nowhere to stand.'

As I reflected that night on the remembered fragments of my life, and looked backwards at the crisscross patterns of my choices, ministries and passions, what emerged was the vague shape of the fundamental option that I pursued, the main attraction and focus of my energies and efforts. I like to call it, as Michael Mayne did, the *cantus firmus*, the enduring melody of his magnificent life. It is when we find age, autumn or a golden jubilee upon us that we are drawn to reflect on the mostly unnoticed warp and weft of our decades.

Blessed John Henry Newman spoke about God's individual call to each of us to fulfil a certain purpose before we die. Infused into our hearts at birth, and purified, emphasised and celebrated at baptism, our role in life is to be true to that compelling commission to reveal something special about God. Without our commitment to that first and deepest vocation, there will forever be a thread of the divine tapestry missing.