

## Daniel's Reflection for Week Beginning 7th February – Seeds in the Heart

How we love to watch the children growing! And how children love to grow! The toddler totters round in her mother's shoes; the small boy rises on tiptoe to deceive the tape measure and squeeze the last cm into his height; the young girl is impatient to be a year older. But are YOU growing? Do YOU notice any change in yourself these years? Do you know whether you are gradually transforming yourself into another stage of deeper living? Do you ever ask yourself the question? Do you even care?

For the Christian the only call is to wholeness. The Gospel is all about growing; the Eucharist is all about being nourished into new life; the Easter community is all about enriching the quality of each day's living. God's Word is a beckoning Word. Baptism is the welcome into the family of Life where the exciting healing and strengthening happens. But ARE we growing? Do we FEEL the abundant energy offered to us? Or are we STUCK? When our ears are blocked by busyness and attachments we cannot hear the whispered invitation to freedom. Is our own spirit empty enough to receive the message or is it clogged up with small addictions and big plans?

There is little point shooting the messenger when we ourselves ignore the message. To blame the preacher is to fool ourselves. If our soil is rich the seed will grow. When the student is ready the teacher will come. The risk is small and the reward is our dream come true. We give up little and we gain everything. We surrender only to win. We become powerless only to connect with the source of all power. We give in only to claim our true freedom for ever. When we stop worrying our inner beauty shines out.

Growing is risky. It requires trust. We have a choice. The child or the plant hasn't. At every moment we make a decision for or against growing. We usually opt for staying stuck. And we defend that position. We resist all attempts to set us free. We ridicule the healer. Because sometimes we get attached to our negative nests. It gives us a reason for acting the martyr. By staying the victim and wallowing in our carefully-kept hurts we feel justified in criticising, blaming and condemning. The unconditional love of God makes it safe to grow up. Because nothing is lost. All is gain.

I came across the following in a Confirmation lesson for young people. It is about the Call to Grow.

*There once was a seed who didn't want to grow.  
He wanted to stay in the dark below.  
And even when rain came and tapped on his door  
Saying 'Come out to play', he curled up more.  
His brothers and sisters were growing up fast.  
They said 'Hurry up brother or else you'll be last.  
We can dance with the wind and grow side by side  
And drink in the rain', but their brother replied,  
'I'm not going up to be shaken and blown  
By the wind and the rain, I'll just stay on my own.'  
But still they insisted, 'Oh, come brother grow,  
And we'll stand close together when winter winds blow.'  
So he stretched himself upwards with all of his might,  
And he burst through the earth to the air and the light.  
And he danced with the others for many an hour.  
No longer a seed but a beautiful flower. (Children of God series)*

It is not easy to let go of the hurts that fester, the anger that smoulders, the fear that haunts or the loss that eats away at our unprotected hearts. In fact it is impossible. Only the power of a god can do it – the God who waits in the seeds within us. And then, like the desert after a fall of rain, the greening begins. Like the first

outdoor walk on a Spring day after Winter of illness, the healing happens. Like a river of love after a dry year of the heart, the celebrations begin. That's what it's like to grow.

*As the pear seed grows into a pear tree*

*And the hazel seeds grow into a hazel tree*

*The seeds of God grow into God.*

*May you keep green and growing.* (Meister Eckhart)

Merton wished that all people could see 'the secret beauty of their hearts, the depths of their hearts where neither sin nor desire can reach, the core of their reality, the person that each one is in God's eyes. If only they could all see themselves as they really are.'

Do we ever reflect on these things? Do we think about the Source of our gifts, our desires, our restless searching – the inner life we share with our Creator? Do we know that a God exists who understands our ambiguous story, who, in spite of everything, always delights in us , who alone can give us the gift we has always longed for – the gift of our truest self?

\*\*\*The Happiness Habit is now back in print \*\*\*