

Daniel's reflection for week beginning 18th July - The Closeness of our Human God

Think of the person who loves you most; who believes in you, who adores you, who loves you and knows you the closeness of our human God by heart. *(Pause)* Now that real relationship gives a glimpse of. God is not out there somewhere, far away, judging who's good and who's bad, who's worthy and who's unworthy. So close is God to us that God lives at the centre of our lives, of our families, of all that happens in our homes, in the seasons of the fields, in the rivers and hills around us. Nature is called the first Bible; glimpses of God's love are all around us the poets tell us – 'I see his blood upon the rose,' wrote Joseph Mary Plunkett and Patrick Kavanagh even saw our 'beautiful, beautiful, beautiful God breathing his love in a cut-away bog'!

And God is the heart of our friendships, in all the nooks and crannies of our own hearts – that is where God is utterly at home - in our minds, our emotions, our bodies, our souls. God is the very life of us. Everything we do is done with God's loving energy. When we love, our human love is God's love happening. When we forgive another, that is God's forgiveness too. When we help a lost soul, that is how God touches that person through us. It is redemption for the other person; it is redemption for ourselves.

Do you believe this? That everything about you is sacred? Remember what Jesus said to St Teresa; 'Without your eyes . . .' - therefore all our experiences, not just the holy ones, are experiences of God. Never doubt this. It is the secret of our faith. The more truly human we are the more truly divine we are. Why? Because Jesus was truly human – and he was God. There is no division anymore between being human and being divine, between ordinary life and the sacred life, between heaven and earth, between God and us as Pope Francis says in *Laudato Si'* – *It is our humble conviction that the divine and the human meet in the slightest detail in the seamless garment of God's creation, in the last speck of dust of our planet*!"[18]

So there is no longer any line down the middle between our daily, routine, menial tasks and the worship of God. The love of a mother for her baby is God's own love incarnate. The love of a farmer for the fields and the harvest is God's own longing, too. The smallest act of compassion, or patience, or service brings heaven to earth again. Every breath we breathe is the loving whisper of God; every beat of our heart is God's reminder of how safe we are. Every time we look at, or touch someone with love, that is God's look and touch too. Please read what the Pope is constantly saying and always writing about - the meaning of God becoming human.

It will take time for us to believe all of this like second nature. Because of a very flawed R.E and missions when we were small, many will say it isn't true. But our sacred, human hearts know it already. Our presence here today is but a reminder of this good news. For me, the time of Holy Communion has become so necessary and important. It is such a sublime moment of utter intimacy. Try to think about it in this way from now on.

At every Mass, our broken bodies, broken minds, broken spirits, broken hearts, broken lives, the diminishment of old age, are all caught up in the broken bread at the Table of healing and love. Try to remember this every time you go to Holy Communion. And from this day on, let a new joy into your lives. For that were you born. For that did Jesus die. For that was he raised up again. It is that same joy I wish for you now and for the rest of your precious lives.

(Extract from a retreat Daniel gave at the National Shrine of Scotland to Our Lady of Lourdes at Carfin, Motherwell.)