

Daniel's reflection for week beginning 15th November-

The Gift You Are - For the World

I pray for you at this time.

Alongside the joy in our lives, in these November days there is also much anxiety -about children, about extra pressures, about memories of missing loved ones. Images of Christmas appear all around us and for many the anticipation of the feast can be a strange time. But at its heart Christmas is a stunning revelation that God is no longer an absentee landlord in heaven; each day he walks the Earth within us and in the person of a needy neighbour. It takes a lifetime of reflection to begin to understand this mystery. With the wind of the spirit behind us let us, in God's name use these days to review the shape of our lives, our priorities and our omissions as we prepare to celebrate anew the birth of Jesus.

We are called, I feel sure, to see the wider picture of our extended Christian family, the family beyond our homes and beyond our shores, where Christ's body is daily and nightly in serious pain. The revelation of Christmas wakes us up from our more comfortable weekly religious routine and points us towards suffering and injustice of all kinds in the shocking situations around us. Without our full-hearted cooperation, Christ's merciful healing cannot happen.

May I, in gratitude, therefore, offer you some gifts for the home of your heart and for the heart of our world.

The gift of your beauty - you are carefully designed in the image of God's own loveliness

The gift of listening - when you listen without judging you mediate God's mercy

The gift of tears - may you experience the healing of expressed sorrow

The gift of compassion - so that you will see all creatures as your sisters and brothers

The gift of affection - offer many words of friendship and praise

The gift of vision - may you believe in the light even before the dawn has yet come

The gift of your child - may you discover in your child, the one in your home and the one in your heart, the ability to play again to trust, to let to go, to dream

The gift of yourself - so that you will regain your self-confidence, your self-esteem your true worth and your personal power. (All three!)

May the joy of God fill your hearts during these days of wonder.

(St Benedict's Bulletin, November 1991 but perhaps speaking to us still in 2020 as we cope with COVID 19)