

This reflection is an extract from Episode 1 of 'An Astonishing Secret – The Love Story of Creation and the Wonder of You' video course, therefore please read as if being spoken.

Daniel's reflection for week beginning 17th January – The Hazelnut

Love changes everything. Of course, the story of Creation is not just a story about us. It is the love story about everything. There is a story about Lady Julian of Norwich. One day she had a conversation with God:

'And the Lord showed me,' she said, 'a small hazelnut in the palm of my hand.'

'What is this Lord?' she asked.

'It is everything created,' the Lord said.

'And how does that survive?' I asked.

'It shall survive forever because I love it,' said the Lord.

'I knew then I had learned three important truths.

One God made it.

Two, God loves it.

Three that Love sustains and nourishes it.

This is the love-energy of God's presence in all things. Pope Francis says it beautifully in *Laudato Si*.

'It is our humble belief that the fullness of God and of creation there is the slightest fragment of God's garment in the least speck of dust on the planet.' . . .

Part of the Astonishing Secret, then, is to know that when we are in the presence of true love, we are in the presence of God we don't have to struggle to find this presence because we are already it. We are the incarnation of God's love. Every beautiful heartbeat, every breath we take is an incarnation of the Holy Spirit. Every day is a divine one. Faith is the continuing effort to believe and trust

As an example, this would mean a completely new understanding of the sacraments as Fr Herbert McCabe explained (quote in last week's reflection). The sacraments are there to remind us that everything is already sacred, already full of God's presence. We celebrate and give thanks for what already is, as Lady Julian realised. Take the sacrament of reconciliation for example. We gather to celebrate the fact that we are already forgiven. We celebrate reconciliation in thanksgiving and to remind us of how sinful we are, sinful but forgiven. And, most importantly, we celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation to make sure that we entirely forgive everybody for everything. It is a huge commitment that we can draw a line under things, let things go and forgive, thereby deepening that whole banquet of love, that whole community of love in our world. We hope one day that this world, through our efforts to love more, to forgive more, will eventually become God's dream for our

world, a community of love.

Do you believe that? Do you want to believe that?

‘This whole, astonishing realisation’, writes Richard Rohr, ‘is an earthquake in your brain, a hurricane in your heart, a Copernican revolution in your mind, a transforming shift in your consciousness’. . .

I’ll leave you with this question:

Is this remark, in any sense, true for you? This is a pretty radical new way of seeing, of being, of thinking, of living. It is already in your heart. You are but hearing what you were created to hear. While your mind may struggle because of some past flawed teachings, your heart, I hope, is beginning to rejoice.

(An Astonishing Secret video course can be accessed at <https://astonishingsecret.org>
A DVD set of the video course can be obtained from Pauline Books and Media
<https://www.paulineuk.org/browse/dvds/item/astonishing-secret/5031446770610>)