

Daniel's reflection for week beginning 24th September Time for Timeless Things

We are all blessed with mystical potential as well as with a more practical one; with a contemplative mind as well as the more calculating one; with a readiness for break-through into true wisdom as well as with growth in knowledge of facts; with a potential for real transformation as well as with an increased understanding. Jesus was forever calling us forward into our true humanity and away from our fallen condition. He was always removing the suffocating boundaries of fear that we place around ourselves, and revealing the infinite horizons in accord with our divine destiny. Now grace maybe gift; it does not follow that it is always easy. In our supercharged, overstressed lives, how do we find time for timeless things happen for the watching and waiting that are necessary pre-requisites for Sacramental vision, for developing a mystical presence, for painful growing into a sense of the sacred? What is implied if we hope to ingest and live and work out of that kind of theology, is a lot of dying and rising, of splintering and mending, in the process of transformation. 'Are you prepared to break your heart and mind,' Archbishop Rowan Williams asks, 'to purify and clarify your vision?' The contemplative vision springs from the loving observation of what is. 'Tenderness comes from long looking,' wrote Theodore Roethke. What Mary Gray calls 'Sacramental perception' comes only after discipline and focus. But when it does we are captivated for life. It is about a quality of presence, about what scientist-writer Anne Dillard describes as truly 'being there': 'I saw the backyard cedar where the mourning doves roost, charged and transfigured, each cell buzzing with flame. I stood on the grass with lights in it, grass that was wholly fire, utterly focused and totally dreamed. It was less like seeing them than being seen for the first time, knocked breathless by a powerful glance. The flood of fire abated but I'm still spending the power. . . The vision comes and goes, mostly goes, but I live for it, for the moment when the mountains open and the new light roars in spate through the cracks, and the mountain slam.' Take time today to remember those lasting moments when you were transformed, those places of grace when your faith became an experience, those special moments or peak moments that will never leave you.

(Begin with the Heart pp 42/43)