

Daniel's reflection for week beginning 20th May Unconditionally Loved

Most Catholics do not believe in an unconditionally loving God. The caricature of an angry Father, drummed into us in childhood, has burned a deadly suspicion into our minds. Such indoctrination (it has been called the 'spiritual abuse' of children) destroys the possibility of ever trusting such a terrible monstrosity. Small wonder that most Catholics still regard God with a hidden fear. For generations, the clouds of threats about hell and limbo and divine anger and retribution have savagely closed the pathways into God's loving, reaching heart. We become defined as 'bad', from the beginning, rather than as beloved. How do we comfort and reassure our suffering, disillusioned, drifting young and old Church members that they are not exiled sinners in a fallen world? No! They are, instead, our Mother-God's beloved children carrying a dream of unutterable beauty. Why do we need to be converted to this sublime and (for most) new and radical understanding of our faith? Because it will transform our hearts. 'Those who are committed to defending human dignity can find in the Christian faith the deepest reasons for this commitment . . .' When we know the astonishing love story of our creation and evolution we develop a fierce determination to protect and defend each other, especially those who are suffering poverty in any way, and then to do everything possible for the well-being of this beautiful Earth where all is connected and held together by the leading strings of divine love and energy. Here again Pope Francis is reemphasising a most wonderful picture of God's unconditional love, and his imaginative ways of cherishing us. He paints a picture of extreme, divine love that will never end. Its infinite depth is non-negotiable. 'You were conceived in the heart of God!' Why were we never told these tender things? That we're in there, cherished, at the very heart of the mystery – a kind of fourth member in the dance of the Blessed Trinity deep within our own hearts!

(Astonishing Secret p65-66)