

Week Beginning 10th March Waiting for the Ambush

Everything about us reaches out to be loved and to love, to become the other. We long for intimacy. We are born for it. We are drawn and driven by this original and persistent desire of our being.

Astonishingly, we are already encompassed by this ultimate and unique embrace – but we will not, dare not or cannot believe it. We risk staying stuck too long in the trappings of routine religion. Beyond our familiar ‘to do’ lists for Lent – the things to give up, the tasks to be taken on, the prayers to squeeze in, the sins to cut out – there is a deeper horizon drawing us closer into a beautiful mystery. The pursuit of this union with God is not hampered by our imperfections and peccadilloes. The surrender to divine love is only blocked by our own futile efforts to improve, to get better, to save our souls. Beyond such mortal strivings there is a matchless immensity around the way God lures and allures our hearts with a divine determination.

When this holy ambush happens, even partially, no one is measuring merit, progress or failure any more. It is ‘grace upon grace’. Astonished, we find ourselves sinking into the love that is now becoming the power and the presence, the very breath of our lives. ‘Hidden with Christ in God’, we care little about our standing in the hierarchies of things; we waste no sleep about what others may think of us; we are experiencing, even if only in glimpses, that unutterably sublime freedom of the children of God. Beyond creeds, formulas and rites, this deeply felt fusion with incarnate Presence reveals to us something of what falling in love with God means. In a sense no effort is required – only the effort to let go into the pure joy of the lover’s desire, to allow the love for which we were created in the first place to happen to us. We wait for our true features to find their true beauty in the radiance of God’s features . . .

At some point during one special Lent, the veils will part just enough to transfix our hearts and transform our lives. That intimate moment will happen when the divine breath blows beauty into our shape, into our face and form . . .

Falling in love with God is like this for everyone. Human hearts are fashioned for this to happen. Nor does it mean loving the world less, and the people in it. It means we love them more. Wherever we love sensitively, passionately and faithfully, we are already in love with God. Entwined with the heart of God, our love now has no fear of it. Utterly safe, we begin to play, to thank, to bless, to live, to adore as never before. (*Unmasking God*, pp 14, 15)