

2012

Week 11 - Prophet of Beauty

There was once a sculptor working hard with his hammer and chisel on a large block of marble. A little boy who was watching him saw nothing more than large r small pieces of stone falling away left and right. He had no idea what was happening. But when the boy returned to the studio a few weeks later, he saw, to his great surprise, a large, powerful lion sitting in the place where the marble block had stood.. With much excitement the boy ran to the sculptor and asked, 'Sir, tell me, how did you know that there was a beautiful lion in the marble?'

We all carry a beautiful lion within us. Most of us are unaware of the lion's presence because no one told us he was there, and anyway he is asleep. . . Made as we are in God's image, why, in spite of the perennial distortion of that image, we are all not daily delighted at the wonderful creation we carry in our hearts. Why are we not moved by our inner splendour, by the bright divinity that makes us sons and daughters of God. This is a deep joy in revealing to people their own beauty, in discovering for them their royal lineage. People yearn for such nourishment . . .

St. Irenaeus was talking about beauty when he said that the glory of God was the fully-alive human being. So was St. Paul when he reminded us that 'our unveiled faces reflect like mirrors the brightness of the Lord, growing brighter and brighter as we are turned into the image that we reflect'. (2Cor 3:18) And in the most wonderful words, Thomas Aquinas assures us that 'God is beauty itself, beautifying all things . . . God puts into creatures, along with a kind of sheen, a reflection of God's own luminous ray, which is the fountain of all light.' (De Divinis Nominibus, n340). We are born for beauty. We hunger for it all our lives. It nourishes us; it delights us; it fills us with good energy. And above all it is such a healing thing.

(New Hearts . . . : pp44, 45)