

2012

Week 16 - Costing Not Less Than Everything

'Tis evening now and the last of the Arctic wildfowl that visit the winter lakes of the local wetlands are leaving for another year. The tufted ducks that live here throughout are silent as I leave the Carmel chapel. A phrase from the second Preface of Lent has stayed in my mind. 'Teach us so to live in this passing world with our hearts set on the world that never ends.' I suppose it is inevitable that we will be half-seduced from time to time in this rapturously wonderful world with its charms and blandishments, precisely because we are created for what is lovely, and because our divine appetite for the beautiful is so intense, we will often be captivated by the less than perfect.

And yet something else needs to be said. For many a year, indeed many a decade I have been graced with a vision of wholeness – a condition of simplicity, to quote the poet, costing not less than everything. It has to do with total giving, with a refusal to compromise, with not settling for less, with a relentless rising beyond all that holds us down and holds us stuck . . . 'with our eyes set on a world that never ends.' There is such a temptation to say 'enough is enough – after all we are only human.' And how many times have I accepted such a reasonable sounding argument and called it a day.

Nevertheless in the midst of my gullibility and addictions to seduction, this beckoning God has challenged me daily to surrender further, to unpeel more layers, to cross more boundaries, to die another death. To experience true freedom of the children of God, I disregard my 'ifs and buts', no more bargaining, no more reasonable and fair pleading, no more recourse to common sense and prudence. Sell everything, trust completely, leap blindly, keep nothing, forgive all – there are no half measures when drinking the full cup. (Passion for the Possible p 171,172)