

2012

Week 18 - Choosing to be grateful

With grace and practice we learn that we have a choice. It is always a revealing exercise to examine our fundamental reaction to the negativities of each day-ful of living. Gratitude, for instance, as a basic option, makes space for a decision, a conscious choice. Scarcely a day passes without the opportunity for putting the following demanding affirmation into practice: 'I can choose to be grateful even when my emotions and feelings are still steeped in hurt and resentment. It is amazing how many occasions present themselves in which I can choose to be grateful when I am criticised, even when my heart still responds in bitterness. I can choose to speak about goodness and beauty, even when my inner eye still looks for someone to accuse or something to call ugly. I can choose to listen to the voices that forgive and look at the faces that smile, even while I still hear the words of revenge and see grimaces of hatred.'

The freedom of this kind of centred response makes us truly ourselves – a gift to God, but not without considerable risk. The risk is in the openness to the Spirit of Life that will not be tamed. The spiritual writer Harry Williams puts it this way: 'absolute love, God's love, makes us fully ourselves, instead of the half people we generally are. And to become fully yourself is a terrible risk. It would commit you to God knows what and lead you to God knows where.'

This, of course is the final seduction. All other seductions are but a shadow-part of this last union. Humanity is seduced by God. God by humanity, as WB Yeats wrote. The mutual seduction is climaxed in the cosmic human-divine kiss we call Jesus.

(Passion for the Possible p 174)