

2012

Week 1

We celebrate the sacraments to body forth the presence of God. There is more to God than monologue. All the sacraments are touching places. There is depth and richness to ritual. Ritual is to our love of God what an embrace is to lovers. It can say and do what words cannot express. Bodies and sacraments go together. 'Without body –without sacrament', writes the Welsh poet and artist David Jones. 'Angels only – no sacrament. Beasts only – no sacrament.' Without human flesh God would have forever remained for ever out of touch and out of reach. It would all be an angelic existence, without substance without salvation. There would be no real heart in it. (1 John 1:1-4).

Jesus lived fully in his body. He embraced young and old, placing his hands on sinners, offering no resistance to the head of John on his breast or to the sensation of Mary's hair on his naked feet. When he reached for his special friends in the most human of ways and yearned, as we all do, for intimacy, he was enfleshing and revealing the true nature of God incarnate. And for children, to be lifted up onto the back or shoulders or hips of Jesus was to be playing with God; to be hugged and kissed by him was to be hugged and kissed by God. The tempo of his heart was always in tune with the divine rhythm. Incredibly, it is the same with us (John 14:12). Incarnation reveals that the many expressions of human love are pulsing with God's love too.

'Our love is the work of God within the human heart.' As Pope Benedict expresses so clearly in *Deus Caritas Est* ('Already Within', pp74, 75), human love is brought to completion in the love of God. And it can never be truly incarnated into our lives without rejoicing in the essential sacredness of the human heart in the human body. In his life, death and resurrection Jesus went far beyond words. So did God in creating humanity . . . At Mass, the body of the man Jesus is transformed into our bodies, and ours into his. We feel the flow of his wine-blood within, merging with our very being at a profound level of surrender and transformation. The divine heartbeat becomes the energy that pulses in ours.

*From 'Already Within', pp 74,75*