

2012

### Week 2 - At the Heart of our Lives

On a Sunday morning I long for our parishioners to walk out of our church with a new spring in their step, a new look of confidence in their eyes, a holy determination to start all over again. I see them sitting there, pervaded by a strange and often heart-wrenching innocence. There is loss in their faces, hope and delight, too, apprehension and guilt. I remember Marie's intense loss when her baby was stillborn, Eleanor's joy at achieving her A-level hopes, the shock of Harry when his wife walked out. 'You are all heroes and heroines exactly as you are,' I say to them. 'If you only knew how unconditionally loved you are, how cherished you are, how safe you are. Today's Eucharist guarantees that everything in your life is sacred. That nothing is lost. That no bitter tear or heartfelt wish is ever wasted. That no sin is ever left unredeemed. That everything, in the end, is harvest.'

Full of these thoughts I carefully hold the bread and wine. They are the fruit of the earth and work of human hands, symbols of the history of Mother Earth, signs of the often tumultuous struggles that rage within the human hearts of our congregation. Then, with all the graced intensity granted to me. I utter, over all this outstanding reality, the shattering work of God, 'This is my body: this is my blood.' Nothing is 'merely' human any more. Everything is now revealed as divinely human, shining with God's incarnate light . . .

Before he died, having exhausted what he could do with words, Jesus went beyond them. He gave us the Eucharist, his physical presence, his kiss, a ritual within which he holds us to his heart. Touch, not words, is often what we need. God picks us up, like a mother her child. Skin needs to be touched. Our bodies need to be nourished. There are times when even holy words are not enough. That is why God became a baby, and why that baby grew up to become our Eucharist.

*(Already Within: pp 77,78)*