

4.. Week Beginning 14th December This is What Love Does

It was a child's comment to her father that started me off on a whole new way of thinking about Christmas. I was studying in the United States at the time, and paying my way by 'doing supply' at a local parish in San Francisco. They were standing together in front of the crib. Her father heard her musing to herself, 'I wonder if God enjoys being a baby.' Especially around this time of Advent, the child's reflection often returns to me and fills my mind. These are the moments when I find the realisation of what Incarnation means overwhelming. The veil of routine seasonal repetitions is briefly parted and the heart is caught off guard . . .

The child in California wondered whether God enjoyed being a baby. . . Maybe God in the beginning, in the loneliness of infinity yearned for playmates. . 'God is sheer joy,' wrote St. Augustine, 'and sheer joy demands companionship.'

Could it be that God created the world in the first place because of a burning desire to be exactly like one of us, and so, to experience everything that human beings experience? Just as the committed love between women and men creates the new life of a baby, so too, the divine essence of extravagant and unconditional longing for human love gives birth to the world and to everything and everyone in it . . .

Imagination is the key to unlocking the undreamed-of beauty that lies behind the question of that wondering child. It was from the untamed wildness in her heart that her quiet reflection came. She was able to form it before we told her the wrong answers, before we boxed shut her creative soul and locked up her wild wonder. Her musings came straight from the divine imagination , still fresh as a daisy in her childhood essence. She sensed the impatience of God with divine invisibility: the need of God to be seen and heard . . .

Dear reader, maybe this is the Christmas when we allow ourselves, like God and like the young girl in our story, to be astonished at what we have taken for granted for far too long; to be deeply transformed by our new vision of the dark beauty and bright wonder of the divine humanity we are all graced with.

(Unmasking God pp 137, 138, 139, 140)