

Ash Wednesday 18/2/26

Each one of us has something to say about God. That is, each one of us reveals something of God to others. That sounds like a huge responsibility, an impossible task, something which, ironically perhaps, we may find ourselves saying we are unworthy of. But it's true and rather than seeing it firstly as a task, as something we have to do, with the temptation to earn our holiness in some way, we can see it as a gift to be received and perpetuated. It's not a matter of earning our way towards something but of opening our hearts to the possibility of goodness, of Godness, made accessible to us through Christ or in St Paul's words:

*'For our sake, God made the sinless one into sin, so that in him we might become the goodness of God' (2 Cor 5:21).*

In other translations the word used here is the 'righteousness of God' but this is problematic for us now perhaps because of the self-aggrandising nature we often associate with 'being right' as opposed to 'being wrong' (just a thought.) No, it's God's goodness, we are being invited to share – that is in the life of God itself - for who is good but God alone?

So perhaps it's more about counting blessings than counting sins – a conversion of heart for sure, a regret for falling away from our high calling, but manifested in the joy of return which needs no outward display of religiosity to reveal itself to others but a relationship to others which is secure in the knowledge that everyone is loved by God and capable in God's love of loving others, not least oneself.

All this takes place first, or as well, in the level of our heart, in that private joy we find when alone with the beloved. We can go to that place physically or mentally, and of course both, so that it becomes part of our being and accessible at anytime and anywhere. It's a recovery of who we truly are so that others may see and rejoice in who we really are also. So it's an individual practice that has a global dimension. Our private prayer is for all – and you don't have to know this in order for it to be so. Now that's a secret worth keeping – an apophatic evangelism, in the words of Dom Laurence Freeman, made possible for us in Christ.

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