

Feast of St Peter & St Paul

29-6-26

In a recent talk by Dom Laurence Freeman on 'The Future of Religion,' he quoted Simone Weil:

"Beauty is the smile of Christ extended through the universe."

I dared to go on from there in an explanation in another talk on why this universe, constituted by a continual flow of matter making and remaking itself, reflects, or mirrors even, the sacrifice and resurrection embodied in Christ and also gives glory or 'beauty' to the universe and to God. I then dared to go on to quote from an article exploring the work of the poet and priest Gerard Manley Hopkins. I'm always on the edge of understanding with Hopkins, but that perhaps is fitting for a poet who dares to bring nature and God together and, on the whole, to keep them together - it's a sacramental take, and I wonder whether we are not seeing something of the possibility of this in that final phrase of today's gospel passage:

*"Whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven;
Whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven."*

This seems to me to bring heaven and earth very close together through the medium of Christ and his message of conversion through the Good News of Forgiveness, a Good News which carries a terrific responsibility for it now depends on our forgiveness of one another, or in the final words of the article I dared to struggle with mentioned above, the author concludes that, in the poetry of Hopkins:

"For the first time in history, a Christian spirituality everything is placed on the knife edge of the mutual election that takes place between God and man." (Professor John Richer 'Balthasar's Sacramental Spirituality and Hopkins' Poetry of Nature: The Sacrifice imprinted upon Nature)

Forgiveness then as a sacrificial act mirroring that of Christ and reconstituting the universe, or recovering its meaning, as the place where God is found, and beauty too.

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