

### Reflection Monday Lent 3 – 2021

One of our anthems in Lent is taken from the psalm today *“My soul is thirsting for God, the God of my life: when can I enter and see the face of God? Ps 41(42)* Although the Naaman story and the Widow of Zarephath story reveal that God works in the most mysterious and unexpected of ways and rarely in the ways we expect, God is always present.

In Celtic spirituality the presence of God is felt and experienced continuously. One of its major themes is the *immanent presence of God*, which means that God is everywhere. For Celtic Christians, God is a key part of all things natural and beautiful. Whereas the ancient Celts worshiped pagan gods in nearly every natural setting, Celtic Christians praised God’s design and creation of all things natural. *“The hills, the sky, the sea, the forests were not God, but their spiritual qualities revealed God and were connected to God.”*

Places where people feel most strongly connected with God’s presence are referred to as *“thin places.”* It is in these places where the seen and unseen worlds are most closely connected and inhabitants of both worlds can momentarily touch the other. *“For Celtic Christians, it is a place where it is possible to touch and be touched by God, as well as the angels, saints and those who have died.”* Ireland seems to have endless *“thin places.”* Thin places for the ancient Celts could be sacred natural landscapes or *“holy places of human construction.”*

For anyone looking around the Irish landscape, locating a thin place in nature seems rather simple. The abundance of beauty makes it easy to recognize God’s imprint and presence. The ruggedness of the Cliffs of Moher, waves of purple rhododendron, vast fields of green and forest-like settings throughout Ireland all seem to convey the idea that God is near at hand. What is true to Ireland is true to any habitat, is true to where you live!

To bring this imminent presence home St Patrick offers us a good summation of Celtic spirituality reminding us just how close God is to us as we are to God: *“Christ, shield me this day: Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ on my right, Christ on my left, Christ when I lie down, Christ when I arise, Christ in the heart of every person who thinks of me, Christ in the eye that sees me, Christ in the ear that hears me.”*