

Homily 13th Sunday Year A 2023

Chief Seattle: 1854 We know that the white man does not understand our ways. One portion of land is the same to him as the next, for he is a stranger who comes in the night and takes from the land whatever he needs. The earth is not his brother, but his enemy, and when he has conquered it, he moves on. He treats his mother, the earth, and his brother, the sky, as things to be bought, plundered, sold like sheep or bright beads. His appetite will devour the earth and leave behind only a desert.

The air is precious to the red man for all things share the same breath, the beast, the tree, the man, they all share the same breath.

Teach your children that the ground beneath their feet is the ashes of our grandfathers. So that they will respect the land, tell your children that the earth is rich with the lives of our kin. Teach your children that we have taught our children that the earth is our mother. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of earth. If men spit upon the ground, they spit upon themselves.

This we know; the earth does not belong to man; man belongs to the earth. This we know. All things are connected like the blood which unites one family. *All things are connected.*

Celtic spirituality shared this same understanding of an interconnectedness between God, humanity and the earth: it was sacramental, the celebration of ordinariness and an earthed humanity. They believed that nothing was secular because everything was sacred. Nothing is outside God's love and grace. The Celts saw God in and through things rather than direct visions. What we hear, see, smell, taste, touch all speaks of God. It is incarnational living. There was no false divide between the sacred and secular. In an integrated life of body and soul, work and worship, wonder and ordinariness, prayer and life are the norm. It is a sacramental outlook because it sees God in everything, encourages a reverence for God's creation and a respect for the care of his world. An everyday spirituality of ordinariness accessible to all. Never anti-intellectual, it was an earthed spirituality that met people where they were. The Celtic approach to God opens up a world in which nothing is too common to be exalted and nothing is so exalted that it cannot be made common. They believed that the presence of God infused daily life and thus transforms it, so that at any moment, any object, any job of work, can become a place for encounter with God. In everyday happenings and ordinary ways, there are prayers for getting up, lighting the fire, getting dressed, milking the cow etc.

From these two perspectives it is easier to see that the Love of God flows freely between God and us and us and God, through the people around us and through the earth that feeds and clothes us. Life, like everything that we love and are, is a free gift from God. Our Love of God and of our neighbour as well as our family comes from the same source, from God. Jesus reminds us that God is the origin of that love and our interconnectedness is not hierarchical, it is individual and personalised but always divine in origin. As so often is the case with Jesus and his teaching, recognising the divine origin of love enables us to love our family, the people we encounter and the earth so much more richly and with a deeper sense of honour, respect and dignity.

A Prayer from Soren Kierkegaard (1813- 1855)

Father in heaven! You have loved us first, help us never forget that You are love so that this sure conviction might triumph in our hearts over the seduction of the world, over the inquietude of the soul, over the anxiety for the future, over the fright of the past, over the distress of the moment.

When we wake up in the morning and turn our soul toward You - You are the first - You have loved us first; if I rise at dawn and at the same second turn my soul toward You in prayer, You are there ahead of me, You have loved me first. When I withdraw from the distractions of the day and turn my soul toward You, You are the first and thus forever

A woman bought a pet parrot, but was horrified to discover that all it did was say mean things and insult her.

Nothing she did could stop it. She was especially worried because her whole family was coming over for Thanksgiving.

When Thanksgiving dinner finally came, the parrot didn't say a word the entire time.

After the meal, the Parrot turned to its owner and said, "*Please forgive my behaviour from before. I was entirely out of line.*" "Wow," the woman said, "*I'm really glad to hear it.*"

"*If I may ask,*" said the Parrot, "*what on Earth did that turkey say to you?*"