

## ***'thin places'- sacred spaces***

***A 'precinct of epiphany'***

**We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now....**

Romans 8:22

God is to be experienced in art and culture, in everyday reality. But the natural world is a **primal** place where God is to be met - a 'precinct of epiphany, the geography of grace'. Just how much a part of my experience of God lies in the natural world? Can I see how 'the spirit of place' could draw me away from self-preoccupation, self-absorption and self-fixation? Do I realise just how much I need beauty and space and silence where I can be most truly myself - drawn beyond my 'small self' - full of anxiety and issues and pre-occupations- towards the Other, the 'mysterious infinity at the heart of all things'?

How aware am I of what our planet is facing at present? How seriously do I take environmental deterioration and destruction? Am I teachable? Am I open? Am I aware? Am I concerned? Can I admit I will need converting - not just to realise we are in crisis, but that we all belong to each other, and to our world - which is our home?

Can my prayer be to experience deep within my being my sense of oneness with all living creatures and with the natural world, and to feel its beauty and its fragility, its wonder and its pain.

**[People today] find it hard to believe in God  
because they do not have available to them  
any lively imaginative picture of the way  
God and the world....are related.**

Denis Nineham

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Philip Carter is a retired Anglican Priest. He was the inaugural president of the Australian Ecumenical Council for Spiritual Direction (AECSD). He ran the Julian Centre in Adelaide, an independent and ecumenical centre for spirituality, from 1997-2009.

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Because nature has become 'a giant gasoline station, or energy source for modern technology and industry' we need to develop our imaginations, and imagine options other than technology as a way of dealing with reality and the natural world. Our world is what we know, and it is fundamental to the way we apprehend God - holy mystery. Every creature is a footprint of the Other, bearing a trace of the divine and is in itself a way to God.

**Can I re-imagine our world**

**and so perceive the God who is sacramentally and symbolically present in all the realities of the natural world?**

**Can I be patient towards mystery?**

**Can I let go of the often insatiable need to 'fix, control or understand' and simply 'be'-  
to be open, and wake up to the fact that 'The meaning is in the waiting'?**

**Can I 'find myself addressed, and being addressed, find myself'?**

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