

MOMENTS OF GRACE

DARKER MOMENTS: 'THE MOST SURPRISING, PRECIOUS MOMENT'

Ruth Cracknell

'Something you somehow haven't to deserve'

Robert Frost

It is the most precious moment I have known; it is the most surprising moment because entirely unexpected. And if this moment I can keep, then nothing more do I need, now or ever. We are not, you see, and this you must believe, in an empty room, but in a space suffused. We are – golden; we seem for a tiny fragment of time, holy; a medieval painting. If only we could be captured as we are now we would be free forever (with our secret), untrammelled....

Ruth Cracknell

Ruth Cracknell is writing very personally of the time her husband died. This is a precious, intimate moment – one of the forever-mysteries of the human experience of life and death. Listen to her words: 'We are not in an empty room, but in a space suffused'. Here she struggles to express the ineffable presence/absence of another....this may be a gentle invitation touch a deep, personal experience of grief.

The extraordinary thing was that there was nothing in that tremendous, unbelievable demonstration of warmth, of warmth in creation, that would remit the pain, no forgetting of the sort of tunnel one was going to walk down afterwards. The pain was included in the consolation. So it wasn't any form of opting out or avoidance. Nevertheless, it was like an enormous promise.

P. J. Kavanagh

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Patrick Kavanagh experiences, in the depths of a very personal loss and grief, the 'warmth in creation' which does not however 'remit the pain'. It was like 'an enormous promise'. Our tradition talks of 'deeper pain, deeper joy'. This is not easy to talk about, not easy to enter - but if it seems appropriate, recall a grief or a loss and savour it, listen to it, feel it. The poet Rilke talks of feeling: 'the weight of God's hand' in such experiences, and at the same time experiencing 'the fullness of our cry'.

God is intimately and immediately, deeply and profoundly present to everything that is. The experience of grief is one of the most shattering and isolating experiences in our life. Yet it does not separate us from reality, but rather engages us with reality at a very deep and poignant manner. However much we might resist it, it can gift us, as we apprehend (if not immediately comprehend) existence at its greatest depth. Such loss, such grief, such sorrow, can become a 'privileged moment' – sharing in the Paschal Mystery of dying and rising.