

17th September 2020

## Natural

**“He does it with better grace, but I do it more natural.”**

*William Shakespeare, Twelfth Night*

Not long after the Covid-19 crisis hit us, I mentioned in a “Thought for the Day” the 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> century Bohemian preacher and reformer, Jan Hus, and his writing of *O sancta simplicitas!* (O holy simplicity!) Living before Martin Luther and John Calvin, yet fundamental to the Reformation of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Hus is considered by many to be one of the great reformers of the Church. Excommunicated by Pope Alexander V, he was asked to recant his reforming views before the Council of Constance, only to respond, “I would not for a chapel of gold retreat from the truth!” In 1415, he was burned at the stake for heresy against the Catholic Church. When he saw an aged peasant bringing a bundle of twigs to throw on the fire, Hus is reported to have said: “O holy simplicity.” Even in the face of death, and even though it caused him harm, Hus saw in the action of the peasant a simple act of service, and in that found holiness.

When I was a hospice chaplain, I spent some time with a man who gently and graciously named all the people he wanted to thank for their care – doctors, nurses, physios, and, as I recall, even the chaplain got a mention. “And the best of them,” he said, “is yon Doris, the domestic, who does ma ward.” I smiled as he continued, “She jist leans on her brush, and asks me how I am, and looks me in the eye. And then she squeezes ma hand, and she winks at me, and I feel like a million dollars.”

I took Doris aside later and told he what the man had said. Doris looked a little embarrassed, but grinned at me and said, “Och, Tom, ah’m just doin’ what comes natural.” Just doing what comes natural ... If we all did what comes naturally and offered an act of kindness in simplicity and love, what a difference we could make. We might even find ourselves spreading holiness to the people around us who need it the most.

### **A prayer for today**

“Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est. Where Charity and Love are, God is there.”  
*In simplicity there is holiness; in kindness there is holiness; in service there is holiness;  
in natural loving there is holiness. And where there is holiness, God is there. Amen.*

*An original reflection by © Tom Gordon*

Also available at <https://swallowsnestnet.wordpress.com>