



## Reverend Elaine's "Reflections" - September 2011

In September's reading, Rupp uses the imagery of musical instruments. She asks what musical instrument are you? She writes that "we are called to be instruments through which the melody of God takes place" (Rupp 118)

I must admit that on an intellectual level I could understand the point that Rupp was making in this chapter- every musical instrument needs to be played, and the person playing is the one to make the music through and with the instrument. Sadly because I am not musical, my connection with this chapter was limited. I could not envision myself as a particular musical instrument, perhaps the bagpipes, I thought, I am Scottish and I do spend a lot of time speaking in the pulpit each week requiring a lot of hot air.

One element that resonated with me was her citation of Martin Buber "It is not the nature of the task but the consecration of the thing that is vital". I believe that as we live our lives we forget, or perhaps don't think that we can, consecrate our lives for God. To consecrate something is to set it aside for a particular purpose. Consecrating our lives to God is to offer everything that we do to God and for God's glory. It means that everything that we do, every moment of our lives and living, is a moment where God's presence is acknowledged. This idea resonates with my understanding of Celtic Spirituality where the sacred and secular were closely intertwined. The Celts had prayers and incantations for almost everything in their lives, from "smoothing" the fire at night, to milking the cows and travelling, for strangers and toothache, birth and death and everything in between. This sacredness of everything in many respects is lost to us. We no longer see God in everything we do and everywhere we go and so we wonder how God can possibly be interested in my life sitting in front of a computer, working in the line at the factory, changing car tires, baking bread, delivering flowers, washing floors. We do not expect to find God in these places; rather we look for God in lofty places such as high churches with stained glass windows, gilt with gold and expensive art - distant. While I agree that God can indeed be found in these religious buildings, I also believe that God is very present in the market place of our lives. I think perhaps that when we believe that God cannot be interested in the humdrum of our daily living then we lose the ability to allow ourselves to be instruments for God. Worse perhaps, we lose sight of God at all and begin to doubt the very presence of the Holy One, anywhere.

Rupp writes "Imagine how differently we might live our lives if, each day when we awakened, we envisioned ourselves as an instrument of God" (Rupp 121) While I still cannot see myself as a flute or violin, I can see myself as an "instrument" of God with God's fingers making the music of my life, with God's breath breathing through me. One difficulty can be holding that idea through each and every moment of life in every encounter in the market place of our lives, in the distress and joy, in the sadness and confusion, tension and heartache. You see if we believe that God is locked away in a gilt place of

stained glass windows and exquisite art, then we cannot see God in our lowly lives. However I think if we can see that we can be instruments of God that God can make music through us and our lives, if we are willing, if we are open, then we can begin to visualise a world where the secular and the sacred are intertwined. We can be open, to “feeling a strength that is not ours “(Rupp 123). Rupp invites us to “be an instrument of God’s goodness. Develop awareness each day of how God makes music through you. Discover anew how God’s love touches others’ lives because of your availability and openness to the divine musicians presence. Enjoy the song that God plays through you”. These are words to spend many days and months with, journaling and being open to allowing God to move through our hearts, smiles, fingers and mouths, making music and joy, offering peace and support, prayers and comfort. Indeed God is present in the market place of our lives in and through each one of us. May we be open to the music that God can make through us and the music God makes through others.