Divonne, Carols and Readings
Sun 14th Dec 2025

- There are moments when time stands still ….

- … and in the stillness, we get a glimpse
- … of something 'other', eternal, true, lovely, abiding, beautiful, healing, hopeful

- Perhaps in the middle of the night, when you see things for what they really are
- … or a piece of art, theatre, music, which speaks to your soul … in the deepest places
- Or the passing of someone close to us, like my oldest and best childhood friend, who died a couple of months ago – it can make you think … and it can also draw aside a little veil, to give a glimpse of some greater reality
- A liminal moment, a point of inflection, on the cusp … of something …
- Eternal somehow touches the mundane …

- Call it 'spiritual' maybe – a half-glimpsed inkling – a curiosity that there might be something more

- A moment of timelessness

- And it can take us beyond:

- Beyond … *the beat of the street, the turn of the mill*
  The fretful rhythm of the money-go-round
  The facts flying faster, each one louder than before …
  Climbing the hill
  Thinking 'is this a life ?'
  The twisting of the knife
  The nagging voice saying
  'What do I have to do ?
  What must I prove today ?'

- Takes us beyond the cynicism, and self-interest
- Beyond the twisting of God to our own purposes, excluding, dividing
- Beyond the manipulation of religious sensibilities for the sake of political expediency

- Beyond the arrogant, abusive, narcissistic manipulation
- Beyond the dehumanising self-interest which means millions of people around the world have to flee their homes, vulnerable to exploitation, abuse, fearful
- Beyond anxiety – about personal change, the future for our children, the way the world is going

- To something that is true, beautiful, healing, hopeful
- Someone (let's call them 'God') who is …
- … simply good
- … 'benevolent'
- but that doesn't quite capture it : '*bienveillant*' in French is better
    - watching over us with kindness

- 'In the beginning' we are about to read …
- 'In the beginning was the word' … 'the light of humanity' … 'and the Word was made flesh' (in C1 Palestine, as contested and troubled then as it is now) … and we perceive a little light shining in the darkness … and we glimpse the glory, full of grace and truth

- And time stands still

- And in the timelessness, we find Healing, Hope

- We find a whisper … of the 'silent certainty of God's presence', *bienveillant*

- A little, lilting melody on the wind, which speaks of the essential goodness of creation, the transforming work of God, and invites us, gently, to be part of that, in Hope …

- To find a space in our heart, our soul, for the possibility that there is an 'other', something (someone?) eternal, who is somehow interested in me

- To believe once again – because maybe we have begun to lose Hope – in a vision of a world where shared values and shared humanity <u>will</u> prevail

- To remind ourselves – because maybe we have begun to forget - that there <u>is</u> one who is at work healing, reconciling, restoring, renewing: and that - despite

challenges, anxieties, setbacks - we have a role to be part of that

- To know that all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well

- That there is one who is … *bienveillant*

- Who invites me to ‘be well in my soul …’ ‘ … be well in your soul’ …

- And then … ‘be part of the world’s healing’

- ‘Be well in your soul, and be part of the world’s healing’

- As time stands still … and we get a glimpse

- of something ‘other’, eternal, true, lovely, abiding, beautiful, healing, hopeful …

- … in the beginning, then, now, this day, tonight, always

Amen