

Entering the Heart of God

DUBLINER and author Andrea Hayes is a frequent contributor to the *Messenger*.



Recently I spent over forty hours in the Accident and Emergency department of Beaumont Hospital with a sick relative. The hours were long and heavy, suspended between anxiety and hope, but the experience became something more. Even though, at times, the reality of death was so close, something sacred unfolded in that strange space. It felt as though life's deepest truths were whispering just beneath the surface of the chaos

and exhaustion.

In those liminal hours that passed by in a haze, I became acutely aware of the fragility of life and of the quiet grace that can rise in the most unexpected places. As a trained spiritual director, I have been taught to listen deeply, to witness without judgement and to hold sacred space for other people's experiences. But A&E presented a new kind of classroom, one where I learned again that the heart of

God is never far away. It beats within every anxious relative, every patient clinging to breath, every kind stranger who offers encouragement and is seen in the eyes of every weary nurse.

Standing in that waiting room filled with fear for my beloved sick mother, I felt a stirring within, a sacred invitation to enter more fully into love. There, amid the hum of machines and the constant cries of humanity, I realised that every moment of compassion, be it a smile, a gentle word, a hand held in silence, or a stranger buying you a cup of tea, is an invitation to enter more deeply into the heart of God. To love in these moments is not to fix or to heal but simply to be fully present. It is to witness the divine pulse that moves through the brokenness of our world. Each act of tenderness, however small, became for me a silent prayer for each person I encountered. Each act of compassion became a doorway into divine presence.

As the new year progresses, many of us are feeling a deep and urgent call, a call to awaken, to act, to embody love in motion. For some this is a new beginning, for others a renewal of an old, familiar vocation of service. In our current climate, where division, fear, and uncertainty seem to echo around us, this call is not abstract or for someone else to answer. It is a call to action through love for all. To become a beacon of unconditional love is not just about words; it is a radical act of pure divine presence. It asks us to stand in empathy with the suffering of others, to tend to our planet and to bring compassion into those places and spaces that feel polarised. Where there is division – socially, politically

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or even in terms of religious belief – here is where we need to answer the call to radical humanity. Love, in this sense, is not passive; it is active, courageous and contagious.

Each of us, in our own way, is invited to respond. Some will offer care to the vulnerable. Others will give voice to justice, nurture the environment or bring healing to fractured communities. All these responses are threads in the great tapestry of divine compassion. Let us make 2026 the year we weave them together, becoming more loving, moment by moment.

In that A&E waiting room, I was reminded that entering the heart of God is not an event but a practice. It is something we must consciously choose, a call we need to answer every day. When we listen deeply, when we witness another's pain without turning away, when we allow love to lead our steps without judgement, we are, in truth, dwelling in the heart of God.

So may we listen for that sacred stirring within us. May we answer the daily call to compassion. And may we recognise, especially in the faces of those we meet, and in our own tender hearts, the living presence of Love itself.