

## Daniel O'Leary (1937 - 2019) – Priest, Poet and Prophet



Daniel, known affectionally as Donal, was an Irish man from Rathmore, County Kerry Ireland, who became a priest of the Diocese of Leeds. He was an author, teacher and poet. As curate and Parish Priest, he worked in parishes for almost 30 years. For another 20 years he taught theology and religious education in St Mary's University College in London and was Chair of its Religious Studies Department before being appointed Episcopal Vicar for Christian Formation in Leeds until 2000.

He held Masters degree in theology, spirituality and religious education. Daniel was an Award-winning author of over 14 books. He was a regular contributor to the Tablet and the Irish Furrow. He facilitated conferences and retreats for parishioners, teachers, catechists, head-teachers, priests and Diocesan RE Advisers and Religious Communities around the country and internationally.

When asked about the search for God, Daniel would simply say, "Begin with the heart." This became the motto and inspiration of his ministry and his very life.

Daniel appreciated with a profound and reverent passion, that a life-enhancing understanding of the Incarnation; the fleshing of God, springs from a traditional and orthodox (but mostly forgotten) theology of nature and grace which transforms our understanding of the Incarnation. This understanding, in turn, transforms the quality of our lives and ministry. Our 'hidden self' emerges and we begin to experience in the here and now, the promised 'abundant life'.

This theology and spirituality, this new way of being and of seeing, became the consummate focus of Daniel's life and ministry and is the heart of his inspirational book and E-course, *An Astonishing Secret*.

<https://astonishingsecret.org/>

*'Donal's lifelong enchantment with how to convey the mystery of incarnation in our lives was his enduring passion. For Donal, the unique Christian message of God becoming human in Jesus was to reveal the of our own humanity. No line any more between the sacred and the secular, between the holy and the profane – all is one. Over and over and every which way possible he wanted to convey that the place we encounter God is in the everyday ordinary happenings of our lives.'* (Margaret Siberry – Colleague and Friend, UK)

*"There are few voices in over fifty years of wrestling with the gospel and our common work which have been so unfailingly illuminating." (Monsignor Tony Doherty, Sydney Australia)*

*"Daniel was a very gracious and gifted person and we will all have special memories of him – treasure them. We are the better for his kindness, his humour, his wisdom and his undying belief in an incarnate God whose name is Love. We give thanks for the many ways he has touched our lives." (Association of Catholic Priest, Ireland)*