

All that God has made is intended to reflect the light of its Creator.

As God's conscious creatures, it is our task to receive and contemplate this reflected light, and give God glory through our welcoming of it. We in turn become illuminated by our awareness of the hand of God, and as St Paul says, *anything illuminated turns into light*. The most beautiful of all praise that we can offer another human being is: *You have been a light to me*. Because the light reflected by another person is not merely theirs, but God's light; and that is how we can become sacraments to each other. This is seen very clearly and celebrated in the sacrament of marriage; but it is true of all our other relationships; and speaking as an unmarried man, I can say that many of the people who have blessed me in this way have been more to me than many married couples are to each other; because God's grace is infallibly present in the seven sacraments, but not in any way confined to them.

The exciting part of today's Gospel is its description of the cumulative nature of God's shining in his children. *To anyone who has, more will be given*. This amazing promise is a terrific consolation to us. As earthly creatures, our common perception is that the older we get, the more we lose our quality; and indeed it is a terrible thing to get old, to lose that early grace and perfection which so often appears in the young. But the shining of the love of God - again, we turn to St Paul - is at its best in our weakness; and the beauty of a life that is being handed over to the love of God is beyond earthly description. The less we obscure and muddy the work of God, the brighter this supernal light becomes. If we have eyes to see, there is an eternal radiance here which nothing will sully or darken.

Today is the first day of the University session, and my thoughts are with the young people from all over the world who will be looking out anxiously - through a veil of British rain - at their new home, and hoping to find some reliable bearings in so strange a place. Many of them have left home for the first time, and many a parent will have spent last night with an aching heart, feeling that a chapter of their life has come to its end. We must think of the University's teachers and administrators, whose awesome rôle it is to turn all this anxiety and bewilderment into a safe, generous, hard-working and successful community of learning. What everyone needs is to be loved and welcomed; and most of them, thank God, find that it is so. We remember the chaplains, and pray that they may be good shepherds to the needy and the lost; and we pray for the young people themselves, that they may see the light of God in one another, and be awakened to the same light in themselves: so that more can be given to them, to share, and illuminate, the whole house.