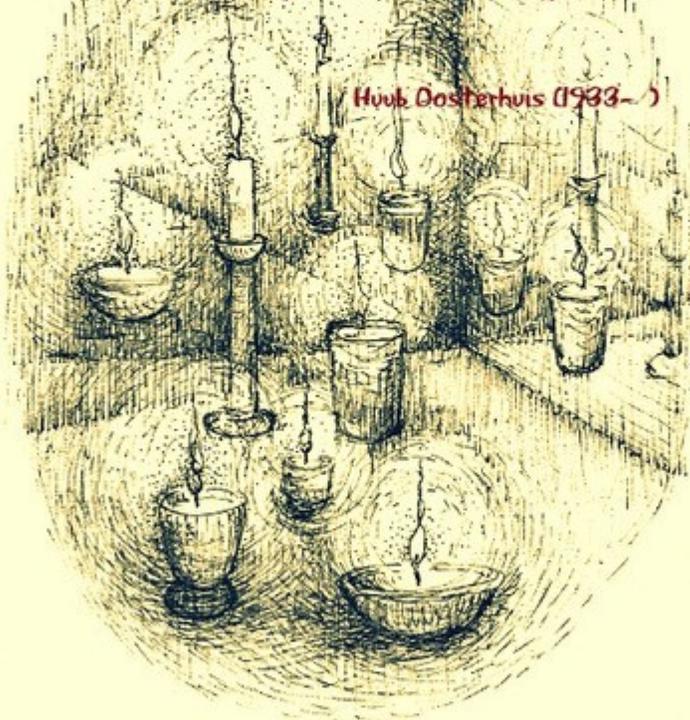


Light, child in me,
look through my eyes and see
if somewhere a world is dawning
where we may live a worthy life

Huib Dosterhuis (1983-)



Unless you follow Swedish metal doom bands (which I don't!) or went to a Catholic school (which I did) the term "Candlemas" probably doesn't mean much to you. But since the 5th century it has been celebrated in some churches on February 2nd . Why? "Oh you mean Groundhog Day!" Well, not exactly but you are getting close. It has more to do with agriculture than religion.

Tomorrow is the mid–point between the Winter Solstice and the Spring Equinox. From very ancient times it has been the beginning of the farming season. Church authorities converted it into a feast of light, when candles are blessed, but the real commemoration is still to be found outdoors.

Here at Starcross, right on cue, the rhododendron and the daffodils bloomed. And, the seed catalogues came out to help plan the garden of 2013. But the important place to be is in the quiet outdoors. This is that special “ordinary time” that is free of the expectations of Advent–Christmas and Lent–Easter–Passover. OK, it is not really quiet. In the country we hear tractors. In the city we hear traffic. But still, looking at the tiny yellow flower of some scrawny weed there comes an inner quiet that helps us face really significant questions like, “What is my life all about?” As we get older that question shifts into the sometimes more desperate concern for finding or fashioning an environment “where we may live a worthy life”.

The Cistercian monk Thomas Merton, who much preferred “ordinary time” to festivals, wrote about the Candlemas ceremony in his abbey where each monk knelt and received a single candle. But how the light was multiplied when all the monks stood together — “Our lives, like candles, spell this simple symbol”.

So here we are, we who gaze at a candle, a blossom, a weed, opening ourselves to a wordless and unexplainable wisdom helping us discover where, and how, we may live worthy lives. A lot of people have stood where we stand. On an ordinary day. A wonderful ordinary day.

Brother Toby