

## Book Preview

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## **Why '*dappled*' and '*grandeur*' under the same breath?**

All things that are true, beautiful and good have the same Architect that have made them so. For me, that Architect has a name, revealed as Father - my God.

It doesn't matter if it is minute and utterly unknown to the human eye or something grand and stupendous that it just takes your breath away. There are also many others that come between those two. Even the mundane of a bothersome daily chore or the extraordinary of striking it rich at a lottery have their day with the *dappled* and the *grandeur*.

You may have encountered some without knowing or realising it...

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### **Children...**

They come in all shapes, sizes and personalities. Love 'em, hate 'em, but you can't do without them. They are our future and what and how they will eventually turn out will depend on what truth, beauty and goodness we share and teach them today.



Two sets of brothers, between them they are cousins. The carefree and playful attitude are obvious here in all innocence, for they have yet to encounter the harsh reality of life. It's an innocence that may need to be reclaimed one day....



A young boy just starting out in school and making new friends, as well as learning new things. It is an exciting period of life where friendships can be forged based on trust or the absence of guile.



An infant assured of a mother's love and a father's protection, he has no need of fear or anxiety. He is a gift to his parents who participated in the creation of all that is good, true and beautiful.



### **Inanimate things...**

Never underestimate them. They can 'say' a lot about a person and reveal a few other things along the way, which, perhaps one doesn't even realise!

I have myself, accumulated a fair bit of thingamajig and knick-knacks or used them in passing and they all, when closely reflected upon, have shown the side of me which I sometimes don't usually take note of. Mostly, I take them for granted as objects that serve their purpose for a period of time. Yet, some have remained with me for much longer and they begin to form a part of my daily life.

Some will show that I do have this streak of being a child at heart, a heart that never really gave up on my childhood which spoke of wonderment, adventure and fun. Sure, mostly these have been crowded out by the exigencies of adult life and the responsibilities that entail now, but once a while, the child inside me would whisper an invitation to play...

These objects run through the various scenes from the mundane to the extraordinary, from the sacred to the 'profane' or secular.

But all of them show me a personality that is able to embrace a variety of interests which is a crucial part of my life that continues to teach, guide and propose what the future can hold for me. They are indicators of the potential and scope of how I may choose to exercise my choices for growth and development of the person that I am now and what I may be for the future.

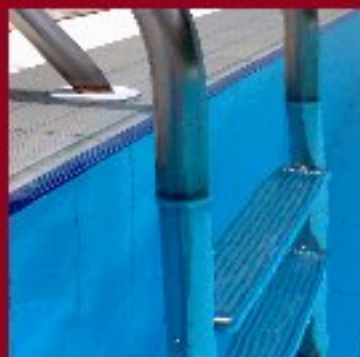
On their own, they may amount to nothing much. However, when put under the ministrations of a person such as myself, they can come 'alive' giving a snap shot of the whats, whys and hows of myself at that point in time.

What goodness, truth and beauty, or the lack thereof, these objects can reveal would depend very much on how I use them.

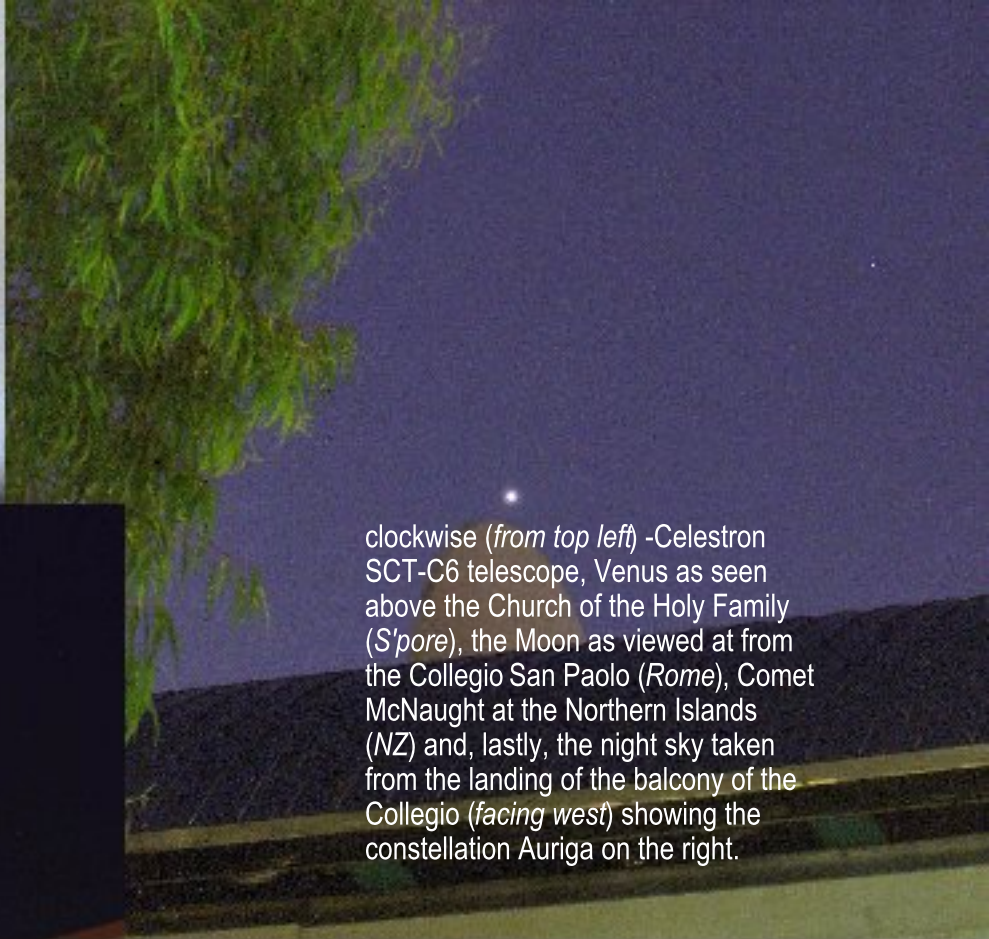
These objects would have no particular meaning in the scenes of my life if I had left them alone or if they were in someone else's possession. Because they were not and that they fell in the very path of my existence, they become signposts for what is ahead.

My challenge, while not reading too much meaning into them, is to see through these objects, how much have I moved closer to my true destination in my pilgrimage towards the Almighty.

Better yet, could these objects show me, in their own unique way, that the Almighty is actually, at the same time, also reaching out earnestly to me?...







clockwise (*from top left*) -Celestron SCT-C6 telescope, Venus as seen above the Church of the Holy Family (*S'pore*), the Moon as viewed at from the Collegio San Paolo (*Rome*), Comet McNaught at the Northern Islands (*NZ*) and, lastly, the night sky taken from the landing of the balcony of the Collegio (*facing west*) showing the constellation Auriga on the right.



**top right** Stargazing at the Collegio's field.  
**bottom right** Moon and her craters.

### The Heavens...

I have a blog which shows my hobby in astronomy that I had picked up about 2 years ago. In that blog I wrote a little description that said: ***THE HEAVENS PROCLAIM THE GLORY OF GOD. I SAW THE NIGHT SKIES WITH MY NAKED EYE AND SAW ETERNITY....***

Man, since time immemorial, looked up into the heavens and has always been stunned by the awesome grandeur of the night sky that evoked all sorts of veneration and even worship. Even today, when we look up into the evening sky and see the stars come out one by one as night makes its entrance, we can't but help feel that the Universe is even much greater that we have already given credit for.

The light of the stars that we can already see is actually the light of a long ago distanced star that may have already disappeared . What we are seeing now is actually the light that have travelled over the vast ocean of outer space of thousands or millions of years ago to reach the retinas of our

eyes, registering its existence.

The distance from one star to the next that we can see with our eyes in the night sky, even takes more than our life time to reach its destination between them. And there are other billions upon billions of stars that can be found in our Universe. That is such a vastness or almost infinite the Universe is really about.

We think we are at the lords and masters because of what we have achieved. Well, looking up at the night sky, I see us as how '*infinitely*' small we actually are! Compared to the Universe before us that we don't even realise mostly, we may be totally ignorant of the grandeur of this particular '*dappled*' thing that always alerts us that the Creator of all that is good, beautiful and true is waiting for us to connect with Him for a ride of our lives that would be extraordinary.

If only we would look up with that same wonder and awe like the early human when he first saw the grandeur of that night sky...





**from top:** Stain glass in Basilica at Loreto, clock at Vatican City



### **Sacred Places, Sacred Scenes**

We are all pilgrims here, in one way or another. We are constantly searching for a resting place that beckons us because we seek an end. An end to our troubles, our sorrows, our trials and sufferings - essentially our sorry state of life here on earth.

I don't think we are ever at rest at a place for too long. Even if we think we seem to have made it with a solid abode we can call our own, we can uproot ourselves and head for a perceived '*greener pastures*' elsewhere.

Such are our restless hearts....

In such situations, there will be places which we would travel to, not immediately and sometimes not of our own making, which seem to say to us that something 'special' is here. It could be on holy ground, in a townsquare or somewhere up in the mountains.

These places may even look normal with nothing to shout about. But to those of us who know, they represent

to us a nexus where the sacred and profane meet.

Each place and even scenes hold the possibilities of connecting us to the grandeur that these dappled items can hide beneath their exterior showing. All it needs is an open heart and mind that is willing to be embrace by the awe of the Divine's action to reach out to us.

These pages and following offer glimpses of such sacred possibilities that can occur in one's life along one's journey to the *real* resting place.



**opposite page:** Stone plaque outside a church near Piediluco

**from bottom:** Mountains near Albaredo, a townsquare at Lake Como.



A photograph of a stone wall. On the left, there is a rough, uneven section of the wall. To its right is a smoother section made of rectangular stone blocks. A dark shadow of a person is cast onto the smoother section. In the center of the shadowed area, there is a small, light-colored rectangular plaque with text. To the right of the plaque, a vertical metal pipe runs down the wall. The entire image is framed by a black border with white circular patterns.

MAI DA SOLO  
HO MANGIATO  
IL MIO TOZZO DI PANE









A townsquare full of people (*Milan*), a balloon ride (*Terni*), a passing train and a cathedral tower (*Florence*), they all can grant an opportunity to engage with the sacred. It may not be that obvious or as perceptive like a lake scene (*Como*) that is certainly inspirational, but all have their unique way to invoke some awareness of an extraordinary moment in time.

## God's Image

As we of the Christian faith all know, we are made in the image and likeness of God. He created us, male and female...

Looking ourselves at the mirror will already tell us just unique we all are. Though we may have resemblance with members of our family, and even have look-alikes elsewhere which we may not be aware of, each of us are uniquely made. We come equip with our own senses, skill, intelligence, temperance and physiognomy that make us just that little bit different from the person next to us.

But we all began in the same manner from that very special place of nurture, safety and warmth: *our mother's womb*.

The faces and poses in the following five pages tell of the uniqueness of the persons that we are and just how diverse and capable we are in extending that image we possess to create a space and a life that we can call our own.



**Jadon Lek**, Singapore, age 1 (2007)

The degrees of differentiation are varied and speaks of combinations that mathematics and biology are having a fine time working through. That the breakthrough of the *Human Genome project* can be hailed as a milestone towards a greater understanding of what makes us tick, it still cannot take away the mystery of our being that is at the very core of our

faith and life in God.

That is because we move and have our being in Him. Just what that may mean to you would depend on how you see yourself in the mirror - but this time in the gentle mirror of God who will reveal to you immense treasure of who you really are and where you are to go from here...



