

Were you ever one of those children who was accused by a teacher of ‘day dreaming’ – those moments when you kind of lost touch with what was going on around you and you went into your own thoughts – what went on last night, who you met, who you fancied, or a host of other things that tripped through your mind.

Then of course we can get lost in a piece of music, of art, a landscape, a night sky – we are lifted out of ourselves, whatever it is, it touches something deep within us.

Then there can be those moments when far from drifting away, something grabs our attention, these moments of apprehension, when things fall into place. I often think back of when, in the period leading up to my physics finals, I was sitting in the Library struggling with part of the course on Quantum Mechanics (the physics of atomic and sub atomic particles). Suddenly something clicked and it made sense. I recall a sense of achievement and then of wonder at the sheer order of creation from the tiniest subatomic particle to the sheer scale of the universe. Words of Psalm 8 came to my mind:

When I consider your heavens, the | work of your | fingers, @
the moon and the | stars that | you have or|dained,

5 What is man, that you should be | mindful | of him; @
the son of man, that | you should | seek him | out? (Ps 8:4,5)

Isaiah in the Temple had moments of apprehension as, in the midst of the Temple worship, the solemn liturgy, the smoke of incense and sacrifice, he was aware that he was in the presence of God in a way he had never experienced before as he sensed God placing a very specific call on his life.

For me the Gospel accounts of transfiguration, such as we read today, tell me of disciples apprehending Jesus, who he was, in a radically new and different way. The setting for that is going off into a quiet place, in the presence of Jesus, to pray. It is in the quiet place that Moses experienced God in the burning bush; it is in the quiet place that Elijah, at the mouth of the cave to which he had fled, experienced God in the still small voice.

All that set me thinking about the importance of that quiet place, of worship, whether here in Church or in the quietness of our own hearts. Ours is a society of activity, of deadlines, a society that is afraid of silence – so we fill it with noise, with activity. Dr Jonathan Sacks, formerly Chief Rabbi of the British Commonwealth, recalls in his book ‘The Dignity of Difference’ attending an interfaith meeting of religious leaders in New York just a few months before 9/11. He recalls reflecting that for all their differences they were united by a common desire to ‘devote themselves not to the noise of now but to the music of eternity.’

How often do we allow the noise of now to drown out the music of eternity? I mention again the importance of those times apart, those times of stillness, times of worship, of consciously seeking the presence of God.

St Paul, in his 2nd Letter to the Church at Corinth, from which we read as our Epistle, speaks of the power of God’s presence to transform. He writes:

‘¹⁸And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror,[#] are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.’ (2 Cor 3:18)

As I indicated in the Lesson sheets, the Greek text can also be translated: ‘And we with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory.’ We see, we reflect. Could I suggest that rather than choosing one or the other, we maintain the apparent paradox. In so doing we recognize that we both see the Lord’s glory in others and are also called to reflect something of that glory ourselves – we both show something of Christ and we recognize something of Christ in each other.

The medieval mystic, Teresa of Avila, in reflecting on Jesus’ continuing ministry through the life and witness of the ordinary Christian reflected:

‘He has no hands but ours,

He has no feet but ours,

He has no lips but ours

We are called to be the hands, the feet, the lips of Christ in the words of today, called to show something of Christ in whatever situation God has placed us.

Becoming more like Christ, showing something of Christ. This is a life changing process. As I was reading around this passage during the week, I came across the following:

‘The worship of Christ, which exposes our soul to his glory, transforms us into his likeness.’

This is nothing less than conversion – not a once off emotional experience – rather a life long ongoing work of God in our lives, as we open up our very souls to him in quietness, in stillness, in worship – as we step back from the noise of now to tune into the music of eternity.

O Jesus, Master Carpenter of Nazareth,
who on the cross through blood and nails didst work man's whole salvation:
Wield well thy tools in this thy workshop;
that we who come to thee rough hewn
may by thy hand be fashioned to a truer beauty and greater usefulness;
for the honour of thy name. **Amen**