



Bread for the Journey

September 2023

Tension Versus Attention

We are all familiar with the story of the Transfiguration, which is attested to in three of the Gospels. Here is part of the account as Luke (Chapter 9) reports it:



‘As Jesus was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendour, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfilment at Jerusalem. Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, “Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” (He did not know what he was saying). While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and covered them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. A voice came from the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.” When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone.’

Peter breaks the tension inherent in this overwhelming event and fills the occasion with words, and foolish ones, at that.

- Have you had a significant, maybe overwhelming, experience of God, of Jesus? How did you react at the time? What does it mean to you now?
- Years later, Peter writes of this experience on the mountain with Jesus, having dwelt with it, reflected on it, and allowed it to feed him spiritually. In 2 Peter 1 v 19, he asks us to, ‘do well and pay attention to it (*the account of the transfiguration, and the witness of the prophets to Jesus*) as to a light shining in a dark place.’ He sees a better way than breaking the *tension* with foolish words that arise on such an occasion. It is better to give *attention*.
- How do you give attention to God? Is God trying to gain your attention in your prayers and life experience just now? What do you think he is trying to say?
- One meaning of transfiguration is, ‘made more beautiful.’ This is God’s purpose for you and humanity - to be transfigured into the likeness of Christ. Reflect on how God is accomplishing that in you and your church's life.
- Give attention to God saying to YOU, ‘This is my son/my daughter, whom I have chosen.’ Is this real for you - that you are precious and chosen? If so, give thanks. If not, pay attention to what God might be saying this week.

Finally, end with this prayer by St. Thomas More:

‘Thank you, dear Jesus, for all that you have given me, all that you have taken away from me, and all that you have left me.’

If you would like to speak confidentially about your life-in-God do contact one of the Anglican Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf’s, Spiritual Directors Group:

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