

## Transfiguration Matthew 5

The Transfiguration gospel, three disciples are treated to a remarkable life-changing vision. Most won't be so fortunate. I wish I had been there!

So how can we be so transformed by the power of God that we are ready to meet the Lord. The inspiring spiritual writer Daniel O'Leary tells us that it is in experiencing the on-going nature of the Incarnation that we ready ourselves because we know not the hour. <sup>1</sup>

Our lives are transformed when we live life in the presence of God, aware of God's essence hiding below the surface of everything human and seeing our relationships and our experiences, and our sins, through the eyes and the mind of Christ.<sup>2</sup> How do we do that?

It is about looking with different eyes. If we examine daily events and accept that at the heart of it all the light of a more profound presence is glimpsed. <sup>3</sup> This way of seeing is called *sacramental imagination*. If we embrace this gift, our complicated and often messy lives may part to reveal a surprising incarnate beauty in and around us. <sup>4</sup> That is God's secret St Paul writes in which all the jewels of wisdom are hidden (1 Cor 2:3). Part of the wisdom is that you are God's poetry, written not with ink but with love from the Holy Spirit, not on tablets of stone but across the pages of human hearts (2 Cor 3). What a sublime image. I wonder if this is where you feel yourself to be in relation to your own body and mind,

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<sup>1</sup> O'Leary, D. *An Astonishing Secret* Passim.

<sup>2</sup> O' Leary, D. *Treasured and Transformed*. Passim pp 17-22

<sup>3</sup> O' Leary, D. *Ibid*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*

behaviours, attitudes and dare I use the word sin? In the sense of separation from God. Where are you?

Daniel O'Leary tells us that the work and play of faith imagination is <sup>5</sup>to perceive the deeper meaning of the ordinary, to touch God in realities of our lives and to make the invisible visible.

Simone Weil wrote: we don't have to travel far to find God-we only have to notice things. It is here that the finite and the infinite live in the same place and that the holy is laid bare. This is the daily grace we long for.

Striving for closeness with God is a challenge. I don't know about you, but I find I am too easily distracted so I need help to exploration of God in the ordinary. It is certainly the basis of the Ignatian approach. Now for some of you this suggestion might lack substance. How can the ordinary be of God?

The truth is that the sacramental approach that sees a beautiful vision of **the incarnation in everything**. If we accept this image of incarnation, it is within our power to bring a unique wisdom to every conversation, relationship and experience. We have snatches or glimpses of this vision as we learn more about it. It is our call to look for ways to explore this possibility. As we learn about it there are implications of this view of the incarnation. What is it the essence this way of looking?

It is simple really, we have to look honestly at what is going on in our own heart. St John Chrysostom wrote whatever unlocks the human heart unlocks the heart of God as well<sup>6</sup>. We have to be brave enough to look into our heart, we need to be vulnerable about what we find there? I have spoken about this

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

recently. Some of what we find in our heart may not be positive. Perhaps we see sin. Are we able to become humble and say ‘I was wrong, this is a poor response, I need to change’? This reflection is the place of intimacy with God. This is where even our shortfalls can bring us close to God. Can we accept that even when we know our lack, God is restorative we are loved.<sup>7</sup> Here is a beautiful explanation of where we find God. The great Theologian Karl Rahner calls this way of looking at life “the mysticism of life”. All our lives and loves are the work of God in the human heart.

So how do we hold the story of the Transfiguration and readiness to meet the Lord, in our heart? Let’s take a moment of stillness in the light and see what emerges from the heart as we listen to a Jan Richardson blessing.

## **Dazzling**

Believe me, I know

how tempting it is

to remain inside this blessing,

to linger where everything

is dazzling

and clear.

We could build walls

around this blessing,

put a roof over it.

We could bring in a table, chairs,

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid

have the most amazing meals.

We could make a home.

We could stay.

But this blessing  
is built for leaving.

This blessing,  
is made for coming down  
the mountain.

This blessing  
wants to be in motion,  
to travel with you  
as you return  
to level ground  
it will seem strange  
how quiet this blessing becomes  
when it returns to earth.

It is not shy.

It is not afraid.

It simply knows  
how to bide its time,  
to watch and wait,  
to discern and pray

until the moment comes  
when it will reveal  
everything it knows,  
when it will shine forth  
with all it has seen,  
when it will dazzle  
with the unforgettable light  
you have carried  
all this way.

– Jan Richardson

*Circle of Grace*

## References

Richardson, J. *The Circle of Grace* Warton Gospeller Press  
Florida 2015

O’Leary, D. *Dancing To My Death* Columbia Books Dublin  
2019