

Nicky Campbell is retiring from leading Holy Trinity, Brompton and, in this week's Tablet, describes the conversion experience which led him to change from avowed atheist to a believing disciple of Christ. It was as if, he said, he'd only previously read the Bible in a world of black and white and suddenly he sees it all in colour for the first time. It's a dramatic difference, a moment of heightened awareness, which, no doubt, becomes subdued as time passes and we get used to it, but this entry into a new world is always remembered. It was similar for myself and I remember thinking, 'Why hasn't this happened before? Why didn't anyone tell me the Bible could be so exciting?' And, again, it has become more humdrum now, but that initial moment of conversion is never forgotten and comes in to play again occasionally, when needed or rather, when God permits, for we couldn't live with such heightened awareness all the time: it becomes a background hum instead.

I wonder whether we can see the Transfiguration in this light, also? A moment of heightened awareness for the disciples and, perhaps, for Jesus too, which must pass, but changes their world from black and white to colour, making them sensitive to all the spiritual nuances that are around us, that all creation conveys, but which would be too much for us if we understood or saw them all of the time. Imagine a psychoanalyst or a doctor who could never relax into ordinary life, looking at everyone and everything as objects to be analysed. What a miserable existence! No, somehow we have to hold on to these peak experiences as reference points for future use, but now, need to come down from the mountain and live life in ordinary. Christ has come, Christ will come again, and Christ is with us now in the ordinary events and people of each day and, just occasionally, we will see them shine in all their glory. And perhaps others may, just occasionally, see this in us, too.

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