

SUNDAY PLUS

Silence speaks

Listen attentively



by Dr Bridie Stringer

At a time when it is virtually impossible to be out of contact with the wider world, today's Gospel tells the story of three followers of Jesus entrusted with a very special insight into who he really is and they have no opportunity to share that knowledge with others.

If this incident had occurred in our own time, the apostles might well have tried to take selfies with Moses and Elijah or post messages on Twitter about what they had seen and heard. Instead of offering to build three tents, Peter might have suggested writing an app so that others could share that incredible mountain-top experience when their leader, Jesus, made direct contact with the giver of the Law, Moses, and the most famous prophet of all, Elijah. Surely this

would have increased their credibility rating with the religious and political authorities.

Instead, they are simply urged by the voice in the cloud: "listen to him!" If they had ignored this instruction, their account would of course have been very different to the one which they gave after the resurrection of Jesus.

Sometimes we too need to be silent, to listen attentively and to ponder because we don't yet know the half of it. The transfiguration which Jesus experienced and to which he invites us, may well be achieved through a painful process of reappraisal and renewal. We need to listen attentively, prayerfully and trustfully and perhaps only later will it all make sense.

Dr Bridie Stringer, is married with two daughters, a son-in law and "two adorable grandsons".

Listen to your heart

by Des Kelly

At the transfiguration of Jesus, Peter, James and John got a glimpse of the resurrected body and heaven. We all get glimpses of heaven in our own lives; there are moments when we wish the world would stop and stay the same for ever, for example, the baby and the mother or lovers looking at each other. Scripture tells us after the transfiguration the disciples kept silent but did not stop thinking. In silence we seem to think more and listen to our hearts, for instance, at night before we sleep or before the Blessed Sacrament. In fact, the power of thinking can shape who you are and what you become. It is interesting that God gave us two ears and one mouth so perhaps

this was to encourage us to listen more and speak less. Thomas Merton said, "It is in deep solitude and silence can I find the gentleness with which I can truly love my brothers and sisters."

Since Des Kelly retired from full-time education, he has led various missions and staff inset days in many parishes and schools across both Westminster and Brentwood Dioceses.

Lord, give me a heart that is open to your voice speaking through the people I meet and the things that happen in the course of daily life. Amen.

Take time to think

by Catherine Pepinster

Silence. It's very rare in the modern world and many of us, unused to it, find it unsettling. Even when people seem quiet they are usually looking at their mobile phones. But there are times when we are stunned into silence; we don't know what to say because we are so overwhelmed by an experience.

Abraham is so overcome that he is terrified; he is gripped by fear.

While this terror overcame Abraham in a deep sleep, the apostles in Luke's account were similarly tempted by sleep but managed to stay awake. What they saw was also overwhelming, but rather than fear, it inspired a sense of wonder. They had seen something beyond their usual

experience and even their imagination. Perhaps they realised it was wise not to say anything because it might be held against Jesus or misinterpreted. They kept their counsel. Sometimes that is the path of wisdom.

Catherine Pepinster is a former editor of *The Tablet* and the author of *The Keys and the Kingdom - the British and the papacy from John Paul II to Francis*, published by T&T Clark.

"The Lord speaks to us in a variety of ways, at work, through others and at every moment. Yet we simply cannot do without the silence of prolonged prayer... Only if we are prepared to listen, do we have the freedom to set aside our own partial or insufficient ideas, our usual habits and ways of seeing things."

Pope Francis

Today: Genesis 15:5-12, 17-18
Philippians 3:17-4:1
Luke 9:28-36

Monday: Daniel 9:4-10
Luke 6:36-38

Tuesday: 2 Samuel 7:4-5, 12-14, 16
Romans 4:13, 16-18, 22
Matthew 1:16, 18-21, 24
or Luke 2:41-51

Wednesday: Jeremiah 18:18-20
Matthew 20:17-28

Thursday: Jeremiah 17:5-10
Luke 16:19-31

Friday: Genesis 37:3-4, 12-13, 17-28
Matthew 21:33-43, 45-46

Saturday: Micah 7:14-15, 18-20
Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

Next Sunday: Exodus 3:1-8, 13-15
1 Corinthians 10:1-6, 10-12
Luke 13:1-9