



# Beauty

In the experience of beauty we awaken and surrender in the same act

One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple. Psalm 27 v 4.



Baptism of Christ, Piero della Francesca

## Questions for reflection:

He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. (Is. 53:2)

While considering della Francesca's painting John Drury in *Painting the Word* commented 'it is possible to pick out certain characteristics that contribute to its beauty...In every aspect there is harmony, balance, proportion, what ancient writers called 'symmetry' and 'measure'. To what degree do I need to dwell now on either of these truths?

Let it all happen to you: beauty and dread.  
Simply go - no feeling is too much -  
And only this way can we stay in touch.  
*God speaks to each of us (extract), Rainer Maria Rilke*

## Quotes

Dostoevsky wrote that perhaps it is beauty that will save us in the end. Here are a series of quotes from *Divine Beauty* by John O'Donohue worth simply sitting with...

'Beauty is not just a call to growth, it is a transforming presence wherein we unfold towards growth almost before we realize it.'

'When we awaken to the call of beauty, we become aware of new ways of being in the world.'

'The wonder of the beautiful is its ability to surprise us. With swift, sheer grace, it is like a divine breath that blows the heart open.'

'The Beautiful is a threshold which holds the real and the ideal in connection and conversation with each other.'

'In the experience of beauty we awaken and surrender in the same act.'

'Beauty is not all brightness. In the shadowlands of pain and despair we find slow, dark beauty.'

## Reading material:

*Divine Beauty, the divine embrace*, John O'Donohue.  
Introduction, pp. 1-9

*A Brief for the defense*, poem by Jack Gilbert

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