Spirituality
Pencil Preaching





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“This is my beloved Son. Listen to him” (Mark 9:8).

The Transfiguration of the Lord

Dan7:9-10, 13-14; 2 Pet 1:16-19; Mark 9:2-10

Jesus’ Baptism and Transfiguration are brilliant epiphanies in which God affirms his beloved Son in order to prepare him for his crucifixion and death. On the hill of Calvary, God was silent and darkness enveloped Jesus in apparent defeat. His baptism in the Jordan revealed who Jesus was; the Transfiguration revealed that his mission was to fulfill the Law and the Prophets in order to save the world from sin

and death. His suffering on the cross was his ultimate glory, but hidden from the world and revealed only to eyes of faith. All three experiences together advanced the core of Jesus' self-understanding as God's faithful Servant, whose obedience was proclaimed in his last words: "It is accomplished!"

By blind coincidence or diabolical design, the first atomic bomb was dropped on Japan on August 6, 1945, the feast of the Transfiguration. "Little Boy," produced as part of the "Trinity" project, marked the birth of the nuclear age. Its achievement was touted as so significant that only theological superlatives could measure its place in world history. This abuse of religious language was repeated in 1991 when American war planners used another biblical allusion to divine wrath, "Shock and Awe," to describe the air campaign over Baghdad at the start of the Gulf War. The phrase deliberatley flouted American confidence that a righteous Christian God was on its side in its fight against what it caricatured as "Islamic terrorism."

Today's commemoration of the Transfiguration of Jesus is now inseparable from the memory of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, whose ground zero included the largest Catholic Cathedral and worshiping community in Japan. On August 6, 2020, Pope Francis said, "The use of atomic energy for purposes of war is immoral, just as the possessing of nuclear weapons is immoral, as I already said two years ago. We will be judged on this. Future generations will rise to condemn our failure if we spoke of peace but did not act to bring it about among the peoples of the earth."

Can we find any more explicit condemnation of these weapons of mass destruction? To the point, will global arms control come in time to prevent the next disaster?

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