

Not yesterday, not tomorrow, but now

On my 30 day Ignatian retreat I really, really struggled with so much silence. On the first day I thought that the chances of making it through the whole 30 days were very slim. Then I heard from my spiritual director words of advice, which I had heard before but which now suddenly were filled with new meaning, 'take it a day at a time'. In actual fact, I took it an hour at a time and with that came the realisation that God is always in the present moment. Not in the past or the future but in the here and now and therefore to find God one has to concentrate on what is happening here and now. Moreover, God provides strength only for the present. In the Lord's prayer we say 'Give us this day our daily bread'. The children of Israel during their forty years wandering in the wilderness were supplied with mystical bread called manna but if they tried to store it up for more than one day, it became mouldy. Matthew writes, 'So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow brings worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today'. (Matthew 6, verse 34)

Concentrating on the present is far from easy. Our minds like to keep busy and so we think what has happened, we reminisce, we remember. All too easily we think about the future and sometimes we are anxious and fearful about what may or may not happen. In a sense we are too busy living to think about Life. Life in its fullness is in the here and now. The present is all we have. However, with our plans for the future and our memories of the past the present moment is squeezed out. As Charles Wesley wrote, 'the fugitive moment refuses to stay'. (Hymns and Psalms 354)
There are some things which can be done to help one to stay in the present but more of that next week.

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