

DEACON GEORGE'S HOMILY FOR SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

Jesus often went up a mountain to be alone, to pray and converse with his Father. And today was no different. Now, a week earlier, Jesus had asked Peter, "Who do you say I am?" Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." So this time, Jesus decides to take with him, Peter, James and John, his closest disciples, and go up the mountain.

Whilst on the mountain top, Jesus receives an answer, and a response to his prayer. Jesus is transformed, his appearance changes, and his garments shine with heavenly brightness. His face does not belong to this world but is like that of the world to come. The disciples are having a glimpse of the glorified Christ. This glory denotes the presence of heavenly royalty, and the Kingdom of God is in the midst of his people.

Moses and Elijah now appear and they talk with Jesus. The presence of both Moses - the Law-giver, and Elijah - the Prophet, confirms Jesus' personal mission. And his mission **is**, to **fulfil** both the Law and the Prophets. (It is worth noting that, many years earlier, Moses also had had a vision of the glorified God on Mount Sinai and so too did Elijah on Mount Horeb.)

Now Peter, who had previously protested, when Jesus made his first prediction of his passion, again proves Peter's lack of understanding, by him wanting to build three tents. Peter wants to build these tents in order to celebrate a perpetual Jewish feast of the Tabernacles. Because Peter wants this glorified vision to last, he wants to hold on to this moment, and therefore, he wants to withdraw Jesus from this earth, hence the three tents. However, the focus of the transfiguration is not about architecture, it is about who Jesus is?.

Then, a voice is heard coming from the cloud. The cloud signifies a place of the Divine Presence - another symbol of the Glory of God. This causes Peter, James and John to fall down in fear. Once again, they hear the voice and those words spoken at Jesus' baptism, in the river Jordan, "**This is my Son, the Beloved**". These words identify Jesus as the Son of God, and as the servant described in the book of the Prophet Isaiah. On hearing a message of God like this, from the **cloud**, is it any wonder that Jesus is radiant and aglow. However, **this time**, the disciples hear the **additional** words, "**Listen to him**". These words give Jesus **authority**. To sum up: the Transfiguration marks an important stage in the revelation of Jesus as the Christ and the Son of God. It also reveals the kingdom of God. Because it looks back to the Old Testament and shows how Christ fulfils it, and looks forward to the Cross, the Resurrection, the Ascension, and the Parousia, the second coming of Christ.

As I said earlier, Jesus **receives** an answer to his prayer. The deepest part of Jesus is called forth. His transfiguration, transforms him, enabling him to make that most difficult journey of his life, to take the road to Calvary. So, he comes down from the mountain, sets his face towards Jerusalem, and goes, to come face to face with death. But as for Peter, James and John, God the Father has told them that they **have** to **listen** to Jesus, even when he speaks a message which they do not like, like the prediction of Christ's Passion.

The transfiguration is not about perpetuation, to hold onto, like Peter wanted, it is about transformation, our transformation. However, the transfiguration was not a solitary event in the New Testament. Throughout his public ministry, Jesus in turn, transfigured, or should I say, transformed, many people, the broken, the wounded, and the wayward. Just like his Father, Jesus called to the deepest part of these people, and transformed **them** by the power of God's love, that same power, that transformed Jesus himself.

His transfiguration enabled him to get closer to **who** he really is. And we **too**, get closer to who we really are, when we hear our name called in love. And when that happens, we too become radiant, and we are enabled to face our future, whatever that may be.

Just like Peter, James and John, we too are commanded to "**listen to him**". To listen to Jesus, in prayer, through scripture, at Mass, at exposition, in fact any time day or night, wherever we may be. To hear our name called in love. To hear Jesus, calling to the deepest part of us.

In our Lenten journey, we are called to "**listen to him**" and be transformed. And, to transform, each other, by the power of God's love within us. However, we can only be transformed, and transform others, when we are at peace with Christ. And we can only be at peace with Christ when we are reconciled with God. And to be reconciled to God, requires the sacrament of Reconciliation. But **Is this sacrament** a barrier or a bridge for us? It is when we are at peace with Christ, that we are at our best, at prayer, at listening, and loving. However, it is our **sins** that diminishes our peace with Christ, and hence our transfiguration. **But** it is the healing sacrament of Reconciliation that restores this peace and enables us to be **transformed**. May the peace of the Lord be with you all.