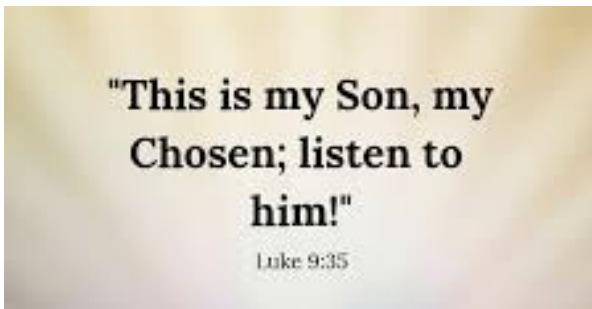


LOOKING AT LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPEL

Luke

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SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

13th March 2022

9:28

Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. ²⁹ And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. ³⁰ Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. ³¹ They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. ³² Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. ³³ Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah"—not knowing what he said. ³⁴ While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. ³⁵ Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" ³⁶ When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.

Thought for the day

Stories of extraordinary experiences can leave us feeling on the outside— such moments of intense awareness of presence are rare and fleeting. And yet, we all have our inklings of something more, the surprise of God in the midst of the everyday. Any deep experience, when we take time to reflect on it and appropriate it, will disclose to us "the beyond in the midst" in Bonhoeffer's happy phrase. Love, birth, death, a child, nature, music, goodness and so on—all tokens of the something more which draws us on.

KIERAN O'MAHONY OSA—www.tarsus.ie

While we may assume that this kind of 'transfiguration' event is outside our realm of experience, life is full of instances where God 'breaks through' into our world. The beauty of our natural world, the power of art and music to move us, the goodness and generosity of others — all these are moments of transformation when God reached out to us. The more we tune in and spend time 'on the mountain' in meditation and prayer, the better we will experience and appreciate God's presence with us.

Bring to mind a transformative moment on your faith journey. Perhaps someone gave you a new insight, or you had an experience which left you with a deeper understanding of God.

The disciples in today's gospel 'stayed awake' and therefore saw Jesus' glory. This week, become aware of God's presence in our daily life. Open your eyes, ears and heart more fully to the small yet real moments of transfiguration.

TRÍONA DOHERTY & JANE MELLETT—Go Deeper

The story of the transfiguration is told each year on this Sunday. This is because in each of the gospels it comes after Jesus had warned his disciples for the first time that he will be rejected in Jerusalem and suffer the ultimate penalty. There are therefore two aspects to the story of the transfiguration.

One is that it affirms Jesus' identity as the beloved of God despite the shadow of the cross that now hangs over his ministry.

The second is that it serves as a reminder to the disciples that their task as they accompany Jesus on the road to Jerusalem is to really listen to him. This puts our Lenten efforts into the right context, as the sole purpose of the season is to bring us to a closer relationship with Jesus and to understand more fully the meaning of his passion, death and resurrection.

SEAN GOAN—Let the Reader Understand, Year C

POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. On the mountain, the disciples saw Jesus in a new way. His appearance changed. Sometimes in friendships there are experiences when we get to know a friend in a deeper way. It is a marvellous moment. This can also happen in our relationship with God. Recall such experiences in your life. Remember what it was like for you and give thanks. How do such memories sustain you in difficult times?
2. The clear vision of Jesus with Moses and Elijah was followed by a frightening experience of being in a cloud. It was in the midst of the cloud that the disciples were instructed: "This is my Son, my Chosen, listen to him." Have you had the experience of learning an important truth about yourself, or about your relationship with God, from moments of confusion as well as from times of joy?
3. The disciples were prepared for this experience by getting an invitation from Jesus to come apart, to withdraw to the mountain. Have there been times when going apart (or making space for quiet and prayer in an ordinary day) was an important element in preparing you for a significant experience?
4. Peter wanted to build three tents. He wanted to hold on to the experience. Have there been experiences that you wanted to hold on to?

JOHN BYRNE OSA—Intercom

This scene has been traditionally been known as the Transfiguration. We cannot reconstruct with any certainty the experience that gave rise to this astonishing story. We only know the evangelists gave it great importance. According to their account, this unique experience allows us to discern something of the real identity of Jesus.

The disciples did not catch on to the profound meaning of what they were experiencing. Peter places Jesus on the same plane as the great personalities of the Bible: giving to each his shelter. Jesus had not yet secured a central and absolute place in his heart.

The voice of God is about to correct him, revealing to him the real identity of Jesus: *This is my Son, whom I have chosen*, the one with the transfigured face. He is not to be confused with Moses or Elijah who are in reflected light. *Listen to him*, and not to anyone else. His word is the only authoritative one. The others have to lead us to him.

The experience of listening to the story of Jesus recounted in the four gospels, had a decisive importance in the church's beginnings within the heart of the Christian communities. We need to recover it today. These four writing constitute for Christians a work we must not equate with the rest of the books from the Bible.

There is something we can find only in the Gospels: it is the impact that Jesus had on the first disciples who felt attracted to him and followed him. The Gospels are not texts that expose academic doctrine about Jesus. Neither are they biographies written to inform us in detail about the history of his life. They are *stories of conversion* calling us to change, follow Jesus, and identify with his project.

JOSE A PAGOLA—Following in the Footsteps of Jesus, Year C

Though we usually refer to this incident as the Transfiguration, Jesus' appearing in glory was only the first stage of the experience the apostles had with him on the mountain. In your meditation then, feel free to enter the story at any stage, and even to remain with any part of the story that touches you, although you might also want to identify with the entire experience taken as a whole.

In verse 28, Jesus takes his three followers up the mountain to pray, and this is a symbol of the withdrawal that must take place before he can be transfigured.

In verses 29 to 31 the transfiguration is described as something that happened to Jesus himself first, before it was seen by the apostles. Note two points that are specific to St Luke's account:

- the change happens while he is praying;
- Moses and Elijah were speaking to him about his passion.

Verses 32 and 33 give us Peter's response. St Luke stresses that it was because he saw them leaving that he wanted to make the tents.

Scripture Reflection

Lord, we who are leaders of communities, of families, of parishes, or the country, we spend too much time and effort talking about love, respect and loyalty.

Teach us to be like Jesus, to take our community with us and go up the mountain to pray together, so that as we pray we may see the glory that is within us.

Our aspects will appear changed and outer appearances which seemed shabby will become brilliant as lightning. Then suddenly we will become aware that we are in communion with our ancestors and we are preparing ourselves for the crises that we are about to face.

MICHEL DE VERTEUIL—*Lectio Divina on the Sunday Gospels*