

2nd Sunday of Lent, Year B

GOSPEL

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Jesus took with him Peter and James and John and led them up a high mountain where they could be alone by themselves. There in their presence he was transfigured: his clothes became dazzlingly white, whiter than any earthly bleacher could make them. Elijah appeared to them with Moses; and they were talking with Jesus. Then Peter spoke to Jesus: 'Rabbi,' he said 'it is wonderful for us to be here; so let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.' He did not know what to say; they were so frightened. And a cloud came, covering them in shadow; and there came a voice from the cloud, 'This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him.' Then suddenly, when they looked round, they saw no one with them any more but only Jesus.

As they came down from the mountain he warned them to tell no one what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead. They observed the warning faithfully, though among themselves they discussed what 'rising from the dead' could mean.

(Mark 9:2-10)

DID YOU KNOW?

Points of interest and Catholic lore

- This event in the life of Jesus is known as the Transfiguration. It is traditionally associated with Mt Tabor near Nazareth in Galilee.
- The words of the voice from the cloud echo the words from heaven at Jesus' baptism, 'You are my Son, the Beloved, my favour rests on you' (Mark 1:11).
- The three disciples who witness Jesus' glory in this episode are the same three who will witness his agony on the Mount of Olives on the night before he died.
- Jesus is joined by Elijah and Moses in this episode. They represent the Prophets and the Law, major sections of the Hebrew Scriptures.

EXPLORING THE WORD

In the biblical tradition, a mountain is often used as the setting for close encounters between God and his people. In this text, Jesus' appearance takes on the imagery of the divine. Those who join Jesus are significant: Moses was the receiver of the Law, and Elijah was the first prophet. Here the Law and the Prophets, the fullness of Scripture, meet Jesus transfigured. Understandably, the disciples are terrified, and Peter suggests they build three tents. This would allow them to remain on the mountain and contemplate the face of God. But this is to misunderstand the true call of the disciple. Gazing heavenwards is not enough; the disciple must also listen and act. The mystery of this response will only become clear when placed in the context of the death and resurrection of Jesus. There can be no side-stepping of the cross and its invitation to all who are followers of Jesus that they too must lose themselves for the sake of others.

- How do you understand the divinity of Jesus?
- When you contemplate the face of Christ, what do you see?

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Opportunities for group discussion and personal prayer

- 'It is wonderful for us to be here.' Is this how you feel?
- 'Listen to him'. When you hear the voice of God's Son, what do you hear him say to you?
- How do you visualise Jesus?
- Read the story of Elijah experiencing God in 1 Kings 19:11-14 and reflect on how you experience God. Is God in the great wind, the earthquake, the fire or the gentle breeze and silence? Spend time alone reflecting on the majesty and mystery of God.
- What have been the occasions when you experienced God in a special way? What did they teach you about God? Share these 'religious experiences' with others.
- A variation of the collect from today's Mass offers a suitable prayer for this week:

O God, you have commanded us to listen to your beloved Son.

Be pleased we pray, to nourish us inwardly by your word.

