

Journeying Together

Second Week of Lent: God's Transfiguring Love



Welcome everyone and allow them time to “arrive” after busy days.

OPENING RESPONSES

Reader: We gather in the name of the Father

**All: Who delights in his human children
when they trust in his infinite love for them
and allow it to change their lives.**

Reader: We gather in the name of the Son

**All: Who models for his brothers and sisters
what a person on fire with the love of God looks like.**

Reader: We gather in the name of the Holy Spirit

**All: Who comes into our souls in baptism
and kindles in us a fire of love
that can transform us
and the world.**

Reader: We gather...

**All: (*making the Sign of the Cross*) in the name of the Father
and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen**

GOSPEL READING – Mark 9: 2-10

Use these or your own words.

Please listen as the Gospel is read. It can help to close your eyes—or look at the person reading—or the image on the screen – whichever suits you best.

Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. Then Peter said to Jesus, ‘*Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.*’ He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, ‘*This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!*’ Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them anymore, but only Jesus.

As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead could mean.

PERSONAL TIME WITH THE GOSPEL

The Gospel for the Second Sunday in Lent is always the Transfiguration – just as the one for the First Sunday is always the Temptation of Jesus. It is as if the Church is offering us two images of Jesus – his humanity in being tempted – and then how his divinity occasionally breaks through and takes his followers by surprise – as in the Transfiguration.

We do not know whether Jesus was expecting the Transfiguration – or Elijah and Moses to appear. We do know that he did not go alone but chose friends to accompany him. This changed their relationship even if the disciples did not understand what was going on.

Think about the Gospel – and all that happens and then ponder for yourself:

- Why do you think Jesus took people up the mountain with him?
- What emotional journey did Peter, James and John go on in this short encounter?
- What do you think Jesus, Moses and Elijah found to talk about?

GROUP REFLECTION

Last week, Jesus was clearly facing a situation alone. This week, he is accompanied by people still living on earth – Peter, James and John – and two people who seem already to have made the transition to heaven – Moses and Elijah. Both Moses and Elijah had very close encounters with God and found themselves able to do and be far more than they ever imagined they could. Moses had a speech impediment but, in a burning bush, God insisted that he would be able to convince Pharaoh to let his people go. (You can find the story here: Exodus 3-4. If you wish to use it, you can find or give a copy to the group to take away to use in their personal prayer. Invite someone to read it in advance and give a summary to the group – or to read it out if time permits). Elijah had a tough time and had given up hope when he hid in a cave – but God called him to the entrance and Elijah realised that God was present in ways that were not dramatic but simple and quiet – but life-changing (see 1 Kings 19: 7-16).

Peter, James and John thought of Jesus as a very good man but this encounter takes their friendship into a different league... and yet, this amazing Lord still walked about with them and ate with them and did ordinary things! Somehow, this reminds us that the gap between heaven and earth is not so great as it often feels.

Here are some thoughts to help you to reflect together on the Gospel.

- What emotional journey did the disciples go on from heading up the hill to going back down again?
- How did it change their view of Jesus?
- Why does Jesus choose to have people accompany him during the Transfiguration rather than doing it alone?

Depending on the size of the group, you might invite people to share any thoughts from their group discussion.

LISTENING TOGETHER

Here are some thoughts drawn from the Gospel. As you listen or read them, make a note of any that strike you – either because they open up a new idea – or because they challenge you – or... any other reason!

- Jesus chooses to have people accompany him on a journey that leads to a very powerful experience for all of them.
- Jesus accompanies the disciples on a physical journey – and on an emotional and spiritual one.
- This is a rare occasion on which Jesus' human and divine natures are "visible" at the same time.
- Peter, James and John suddenly see their friend as the Son of God.
- Moses and Elijah were people who knew that God could intervene in human life in unexpected but life-changing ways.
- Sometimes God shows his power in dramatic or unusual ways (the Transfiguration – or a burning bush) – and sometimes in very simple ones (a small breeze).
- A "mountaintop experience" of God can change someone's life forever.

Give time for people to read through the thoughts and to gather their own reflections. Depending on the size of your group, you might do this as one group or divide people into threes or fours. Invite people to share anything from the Gospel reflection or 'Listening Together' thoughts that has struck them using the timers if you have them. Remind people about the confidentiality – about not interrupting but listening deeply – and to treat this as time of grace on Holy Ground. Again use very quiet music in the background if this feels helpful.

People might like to share on:

- What struck me about this Gospel and the effects on Jesus, Peter, James, John and Elijah and Moses?
- How does sharing experiences or telling others about them help to make them more real?

REFLECTION AND ACTION POINT FOR THE WEEK

In your journal this week, you are invited to look back over your life and see what experiences you have had of feeling God at work in your life. Some – like Moses and the burning bush or Jesus and the Transfiguration might have been dramatic. Others – like finding God in a quiet moment like Elijah – are less dramatic but nonetheless real. As before, what you record in your journal – in writing – or sketching – or whatever works for you – is private but see if you can find something to put into a few words to share with your group next week.

CLOSING PRAYER

All: I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.

Reader: I trusted, even when I said:
'I am sorely afflicted,'
O precious in the eyes of the Lord
is the death of his faithful.

All: I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.

Reader: Your servant, Lord, your servant am I;
you have loosened my bonds.
A thanksgiving sacrifice I make;
I will call on the Lord's name.

All: I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.

Reader: My vows to the Lord I will fulfil
before all his people,
in the courts of the house of the Lord,
in your midst, O Jerusalem.

**All: I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.
Amen**