

7 February 2016, St Peter & St Paul 08.00, Luke 9:28-36

May the words of my mouth and the thoughts of all our hearts be always acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our rock and our Redeemer. Amen.

Here we have another of the pivotal moments in Jesus' life on earth. We should remember that he was about to set out on the journey to Jerusalem and to death on the cross. Earlier in the chapter in verse 20, we heard of another of these pivotal moments when he asked the disciples who they believed him to be, so that he could discern if they truly realised who he was. Here on the Mount of Transfiguration we can never truly know what happened, but from this reading we do know that something tremendous did occur. Jesus had gone there to obtain his heavenly Father's approval for the next significant step that he was about to take. There on the Mount Moses and Elijah appeared to him; Moses the great law-giver and Elijah the greatest of the prophets. It was as if the princes of Israel's life, thought and religion were all telling Jesus to go toward Jerusalem, to death on the cross.

Perhaps the most significant point of this story is that God wants to share his glory with us! We get a glimpse of this when the disciples see Jesus transfigured in glory on the mountain. Luke's account tells us that Jesus' face changed in appearance and his clothing became dazzling white. In Exodus chapter 34 verse 29, when Moses met with God on Mount Sinai, we are told that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians chapter 3 verse 7, that the Israelites could not look at Moses' face because of its brightness. In this passage Jesus appeared in glory with Moses, the great lawgiver of Israel, and with Elijah, the greatest of the prophets, in the presence of three of his beloved apostles.

What is the significance of this mysterious appearance? Jesus went to the mountain knowing full well what awaited him in Jerusalem -- his betrayal, rejection and crucifixion. Jesus very likely discussed this crucial decision to go to the cross with Moses and Elijah. God the Father also spoke with Jesus and gave his approval in verse 35, 'This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!' As we read in 1 Kings chapter 8 verse 10, the cloud which overshadowed Jesus and his apostles fulfilled the dream of the Jews that when the Messiah came the cloud of God's presence would fill the temple again; 'And when the priests came out of the holy place, a cloud filled the house of the Lord,'.

In the Gospel reading today, while all this transpired Peter, James, and John were asleep! When they awoke, they discovered the transfiguration of Jesus along with Moses and Elijah. How much do we miss of God's glory and action because we are asleep spiritually?

There are many things which can keep our minds asleep to the things of God: Mental lethargy and the "unexamined life" can keep us from thinking things through and facing our doubts and questions. The life of ease can also hinder us from considering the challenging or disturbing demands of Christ. Prejudice can make us blind to something new the Lord may have for us; when we are so set in our ways that our minds are shut to new ideas, to new ways in which God might be acting in our lives and the lives of those around us. Even sorrow can be a block until we can see past it to the glory of God.

Are we spiritually awake? Peter, James, and John were privileged witnesses of the glory of Christ. We, too, as disciples of Christ are called to be witnesses of his glory. For St Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians chapter 3 verse 18, 'And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.' The Lord wants to reveal his glory to us, his beloved disciples. Do we seek his presence with faith and reverence?

Let us pray,

"Lord, keep us always alert and awake to you, to your word, your action, and your daily presence in our lives. Let us see your glory." **Amen**