

2nd Sunday of Lent (C)

13th March 2022

‘On this holy mountain’

Gen 15: The Covenant with Abraham: descendants, land, rite.

Ps 26: *It is Your face O Lord that I seek*

Phil 3: *copies of His own glorious body* Lk 4: 1–13: the Transfiguration

So: how is Lent going for you? 10 days in, and have you already scaled the heights and seen the glory of the Lord? ... or are you stuck in the foothills, barely even begun to contemplate the climb, the effort needed to keep Lent well? Which is it? Most likely — if you’re anything like me — somewhere in the middle! And yet, surely the lesson of this 2nd Sunday of Lent — the awesome sight of the Transfigured Jesus — is that to experience the glory of the Lord we have to make the climb, we have to put in the effort, we have to set-to and be determined about keeping Lent well.

Just as we are taken each year by Jesus to the Judaeen wilderness, on the 1st Sunday of Lent; so each year, too, we are taken by Him to the top of Mt Tabor in Galilee, high above the Valley of Jezreel, for the 2nd Sunday of Lent — the mountain of the Transfiguration. On the first Sunday, Jesus mapped out for us the 40 days’

Lenten fast that He asks us to join Him in; and this week He encourages us, for Lent, in a variety of ways atop the mountain.

It’s a spiritual truth that in order to draw closer to God, we have to make an effort. It’s not going to happen without our devotion and commitment. Our Lord made the 3 apostles climb a mountain — and, I assure you, Mt Tabor is a steep one: even in 1st gear, I remember well, it’s a challenging drive up that mountainside! So, also, in Lent we can’t just backslide and expect Lent to be fruitful. We must take up Lent with gusto, with commitment and effort. Yes, the penance of Lent is meant to be significant, and a proper expression of our desire to be with the Lord. We owe it to the Lord to give our very best to Lenten practices. So it’s good, just 10 days in, to re-assess. How’s Lent going? Have we taken on enough? Have we taken on too much? First of all, perhaps, we need some encouragement to take Lent seriously at all.

When they got to the top of Mt Tabor with Jesus, the apostles were rewarded with an unexpected encounter with

the Lord transfigured. They were afraid, at first, and bewildered, didn't know what to say, and probably had to come to terms with what they saw over a long period afterwards. But, the fact is, they had glimpsed something of the Lord in His true, divine, nature. They had seen the Lord shine with a radiance not earthly, but from heaven — a divine glory that hitherto had been hidden from them. Why did the Lord do this? Why did He offer them — just 3 of them — this glimpse of His radiant glory as the Son of God? One may speculate that seeing the light of the transfigured Jesus was what they needed to help them through the dark days ahead — the horrors of seeing their Lord and Master plotted against, arrested, tried falsely, beaten, sentenced by Pilate to death, exposed to the brutality of the Roman soldiers, pressed to carry His own cross on the streets of Jerusalem to Calvary, and there crucified. Surely, the apostles needed a lot of convincing, in their hearts, that their Master was truly the Messiah, when they had to witness His being treated in this dreadful way. The light of the transfigured Jesus is just what they

needed, the spark that kept alive their hope that all was indeed fine in Jesus's plan, despite the Passion and Cross. Having seen the divine light shine out from Jesus's person on the mountain, they knew that even though He was being treated horrifically, He remained in truth the Son of God.

What does this glimpse of Jesus's true radiance mean for us, then, for our keeping of Lent? I think that it lights up our way, too: we know that the efforts we are making for Lent are worthwhile. We need the Lord to light up our Lent — it is a journey in the light, not in the dark! In a way, this glimpse of the Transfiguration is a sign of the much greater light to come at the end of Lent, at Easter. Here, near the start of Lent, we see the light of a mini-Resurrection ... it keeps us going, it shines and lifts our hearts, as we head through Lent towards the great light to shine out at Easter, when Jesus will triumph over death and hell. So, let's walk this Lenten discipline in the light of Jesus: in the light of the truth of who He is, the one and only Son of God, and towards the glorious life-giving light of Easter. Since Jesus is truly the Son of God, it makes

sense to be close to Him. Our whole eternal destiny depends on it!

So, let's make now a practical assessment of Lent. Are we set on being with the Lord more, in climbing with Him towards His glory, so as to receive that much-needed encouragement from Him? What **prayer time** are we offering the Lord as extra? I urge you to make special use of what is offered here for you: the daily 5.30pm Mass; the Tuesday evening and Sunday evening Adoration time; the Friday Stations of the Cross — it would be a really encouraging expression of the seriousness with which we are taking Lent to see greater numbers of you here in the week at the liturgy and devotions. Please make use of this chapel — it's your spiritual home as students in London. Secondly, what of our **fasting**? Maybe this is what we first think of for Lent: what we're giving up. Well, have we managed something significant, but sustainable? Is it working, or has it fallen by the wayside? Let's remember that fasting from something is a really good and valid expression of centring our lives on Christ and not on

ourselves — a traditional sacrifice which says to the Lord with our bodies that we are made ultimately not for the pleasures of this, but for the next. So, keep up your efforts at fasting — tweak them if they aren't working, or if you took on too much to sustain. And the third plank of Lent is our **almsgiving**. Have we decided what we can save from other spending and afford to donate? There are, for example, several options for giving for humanitarian aid to the Ukraine, which is perhaps the most obvious crisis on our minds at the moment. (QR code on the corridor walls, or the [Ideas for Lent sheet](#) ... or here ...



And now, one final thing ... The other effect of the godly light shining out from Jesus on the holy mountain is that He lights up the dark parts of our lives, the parts we'd rather ignore. So, as well as His giving us hope and a reason to keep Lent well, He also helps us see the sins we need to confess. This is not a light we need fear; it's a

light we should welcome. Lent is not only about maintaining some wholesome disciplines in prayer, fasting and almsgiving. There is the important 4th dimension of Lent, which is seeking the forgiveness of our sins. Jesus's radiant light, shining forth from His holy face is also designed to help us examine our consciences and acknowledge the need for Confession and Forgiveness. We need to make sure that this is a part of our Lent, and we'll think about this, again, in future Sundays. For now, do note, and make use of, the Confession times here — Sunday 6–7pm, and Monday 6–7pm; or ask or e-mail at any time for another appointment for Confession: I always make it a priority.

As the apostles needed time to reflect on what they had witnessed on Mt Tabor, so let's also take time at this early point of Lent to weigh up the measure in which we are making an effort to keep Lent well. The Lord is calling us to a mountain-top experience, a real encounter with His divinity, His glory, and His mercy ... Let's embrace willingly this offer He gives us, this Lent, Let's embrace

the exhilaration of the climb, and truly walk closely with Him in love towards the joy of Easter.