

TALK 27th FEBRUARY 2022 Puy de Serre at a Service of the Word

Luke 9: 28-36 *2 Corinthians 3: 12 - 4:2* *Exodus 34: 29-35*

When I was a youngster, growing up on Teesside, we thought a local beauty spot, Roseberry Topping, was a mountain -only to later discover that it was only 1200 ft. above sea level. Of course, we then discovered the Lake District, Wales and Scotland with their somewhat higher mountain ranges.

There's something special about being on top of a mountain. It certainly isn't just the height. Rather is it the clear 360° view it gives us of the world around us, the feeling of being so far removed from our usual routines, or perhaps the realisation that we live in such a beautiful and varied world.

In today's Gospel reading Jesus takes Peter, James and John up a mountain to pray - and while they are there, something amazing happens. Somehow, the face of Jesus changes and his clothes become dazzlingly white. Now, the disciples see him in a different light. However, they still don't understand what he has just told them - about his death and resurrection.

Moses and Elijah appear alongside Jesus. Both had, in their time, experienced meeting God when on mountain-tops. Here we find Moses representing God's gift of the law to his people and Elijah representing the great prophets. As the disciples shield their eyes, a voice from heaven says that Jesus is the Chosen One, God's Son, with whom he is well pleased - and to whom we should all listen.

Peter, James and John have no idea how to interpret what they have seen, but Luke's Gospel gives us some clues. The encounter gives the disciples a new vision of God, a new way of seeing and experiencing him. Its new ground, and it leaves them feeling somehow different. Peter is excited and desperately wants to hold on to the moment, to stay there, experiencing the glory of God.

But its not possible for us to live permanently at the height of such spiritual experience. Peter has to get on with the rest of his life, his everyday, ordinary life.

Neither can we, being changed by God, freeze the special moments- they must make a difference to the way we live.

In Jesus, Peter now saw God revealed in a new way and he was able to grow as a result of his experience. So, how can we discover new ways to meet with God, and to grow in our faith? If we've been Christians for a long time, we can become stale, and maybe even cynical about trying new things, perhaps believing that the way we meet God is the *only* way.

This year, Lent begins this Wednesday, 2nd March. It's an excellent time to try to understand more about God, as we follow Christ on his journey to the cross and the resurrection. So what might we do to experience God in a new way? Perhaps we

could try reading parts of the Bible with which we're not already familiar, revisiting some of our favourite passages, or reading them in a different or newer translation.

We could learn to pray more regularly - or in a new way. Remember, the disciples found it difficult to stay awake while Jesus was praying. But, having made the effort, they were able to see the glory of Jesus, with Moses and Elijah alongside him.

Changing our pattern of prayer can sometimes bring remarkable results as we meet God in new, often surprising, ways. Some Christians have found it helpful to keep a diary during Lent, making a note of times when they've become aware of God being at work in their own or other people's lives.

How about meeting God in the wonder and beauty of nature in some way, or trying to learn something new about his universe? Some people find it useful to review their regular giving over this period - as the way we use our time and gifts says a great deal about our relationship with God.

Others find fasting or giving up something in order that others may benefit enables *them* to grow too. Or how about trying a different church service? No, this isn't about giving up ASV, but mature Christians experience God in many types of worship, and it can be quite exciting to worship in a different style.

Whenever we meet with God, we are changed. Like Moses, *we* might not notice much difference, but *others* will- and do. *We* should be able to see the change in each other - glimpses of the glory of God, shining out from one another.

We can become more like Christ, by following God's advice to listen to his Son and by showing more concern for others than for our own needs. We can express that concern, by the priority we give to working with the helpless, the needy and the poor - where often, those concerned are unable to return our love and concern.

This Lent, let's allow Jesus to meet you and I in a new way or a new place. Let him surprise us as he reveals more of God to us. For this, we need an open mind, belief in his promises, and a determination to follow the way of life he set out for us in his earthly life. We have his assurance that this will enable us to become more and more the person each of us is called to be, as we grow into his likeness.