

Homily. 2nd Sunday in Lent. Year.C. 16/17 March 2019.

Despite the lights and visions and associated glory what they were discussing on the mountain top was Jesus passing, something that's always difficult, painful and sad. His passing in Jerusalem we know as His passover, a costly journey that opened up for us all a new door and way of living. Another translation says that Moses, Elijah and Jesus were talking about His exodus, a word that's equally valid and just as meaningful. It links our memories back to the exodus of the people from slavery to freedom and from a foreign land to a home they could call their own. The light and vision then, along with the cloud and voice from heaven, impressive as they were, had a deeper, more serious purpose; to prepare the disciples minds and hearts, strengthening their souls with courage for the unavoidable, shattering loss that was coming.

St. Luke says that Peter didn't know what he was talking about when he suggested the building of three tents. Of course he didn't know, because accepting that the person in whom they'd hoped and invested their futures was going to end up rejected, despised, crucified as a criminal, dying as one so awfully and so publicly was beyond all human comprehension. It still is for us today if we've been noticing what's going on around us. What can be said for Peter is that he meant well, even if what he wanted was impossible. He simply wanted to stay put, to prolong the time of light and mystery, shot through as it was with aura of the Divine presence, and who wouldn't want that?

The cloud and voice came next putting an end to this longing, this delusion. Speaking in all of God's authority and otherness it confirmed Jesus as the Chosen Son, then issued a command to us all; Listen to Him. It's this commandment, this essential message for the followers and disciples of Christ, that we're trying to heed and practice to this day. Our listening though has to be from the heart and head, involving all that we are, the sort of listening that hears and sees with the ears and eyes of the Lord Himself. Only prayer as a genuine openness and attentiveness to the action of God's grace and Spirit will enable us to do this, our world and daily lives being far too noisy and messy for us to obey unaided.

Jesus passing over, His exodus, brought an end to an old worn out era. The Cross for us, though, isn't a tombstone of desolation, but a doorway which Christ has swung open. He stands now just beyond that open door, still visible to us, calling us to walk in His way if we will listen to Him by placing our steps in those He has left for us. If we want to go through the doorway into a whole new way of living we need all of the encouragement and help we can get.

Our people have done this before when they exited the certainty of slavery for the uncertain decades of desert wandering. They did it again when Moses, their leader, died in sight of the land of promise leaving it to Joshua to take them across the Jordan into their new home. It would take centuries for them to make this land truly theirs. Jesus has done this for us all, breaking the grip of our fear, clearing our pathway into life.

We've had some losses ourselves of late, some closing of familiar doors, for the times are changing in ways we can't control. Sisters Pat and Merrilyn have left us and the convent at Corinda for new lives in Sydney and Bowral. The Presentation Sisters, too, all went from us over the course of a few quick summer months after being in our Corinda Graceville Parish some 82 years, a lifetime of memory and friendship for many. All of this has been sad and difficult, for them and for us.

If we look closely and listen deeply as God has commanded then out of these endings new challenges and opportunities are emerging, once unseen doorways are starting to swing open within our view. We give thanks here and now for all that these women of faith, especially the Presentation Sisters, have bequeathed to us and to countless others along their journey of companionship. We honour and celebrate their lives and gifts, praying them onwards within our community gathered around our heart and hope, the table of the Risen Lord who opens new doors.

For this is the secret and the consolation of our faith; His passing was a passing-over, His exodus led to the new, everlasting homeland. His Cross was and always will be an open door from which Jesus speaks to us still, calling us to come and follow Him, if only we will listen to His voice.