

Homily. 2nd Sunday in Lent. 24/25 February 2024.

Jesus transfiguration came from a time of prayer. It led to an experience of the Divine for Peter, James and John, the disciples who were with him on the mountain. Their experience of God's light shining in Jesus and speaking to them from the cloud was one they neither fully understood at the time and that they certainly didn't forget. We know this as after Jesus resurrection they said what happened and so we have their story today.

Both Moses and Elijah experienced God on Sinai, the Holy Mountain. When the people were in the desert Moses went up and down that peak almost daily, returning with the 10 commandments as well as another 603 that we know about. They are recorded in the first 5 books of our Bible and they still govern the lives of practicing Jews. But these weren't the 1st commandments from God. Those are found in the Book of Genesis when, after creating man and woman, God commanded them to be fruitful and to take up a leading role in managing and ordering the earth and all that God had made. God also ordered these new first people not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. We know they broke these laws and that in so many ways we still do.

Later on because of this Elijah arose at a time when the people were worshipping false gods, disrespecting God's name and ignoring God's holy Sabbath. In essence they were breaking with the first 3 of the 10 fundamental commandments. On Mt. Carmel Elijah defeated the prophets of the false gods by trusting in the responsiveness and power of the One True God. Exhausted by his efforts, his life under threat for what he'd done, Elijah travelled to Sinai, back to the source of the people's original

holiness. There, on the top of Sinai, he encountered God in a quiet gentle breeze-like voice and was renewed in his call and mission of service.

It's these two famous characters that the disciples saw talking with Jesus, shining bright as he was with the splendour of God. As it was on Sinai for Moses and Elijah, so now on the mountain of transfiguration, the disciples received a new short and simple commandment; Listen to Him. Above all else, this is what we aim for when we pray; to listen to Jesus, to learn from his words, deeds, values and his way of living for God and for us all.

This is the 1st New Commandment for Christians. If we heed it and try to obey it then we'll be well on our way to growing closer to Our Lord, conforming our minds, hearts, souls and lives to his and God's will, which is the point of praying. The the Holy Spirit will then be able to speak to us more clearly through the scriptures, the Sacraments, our daily lives and experiences and in our prayer. Over time this will transfigure us, not with visible rays of light shining out of us, but with what it represents and means; the light, life and love of God within us and radiating through us for others.

Let's not forget that the three disciples with Jesus on the mountain had a lot more to learn and a long path still to travel after the transfiguration, yet they are our Saints for ever and so too are we; God's holy, saintly people being made and shaped today into the light of God.