

## **Second Sunday of Lent**

During the Season of Lent we are especially invited to pray with the scriptures. We can do that in many ways. One way that St. Ignatius of Loyola encouraged, was by using our imagination to put ourselves into the story that we are reading.

Today we could imagine ourselves standing with Abram as he hears God calling him to leave his country, his family, his father's house and to set out on a journey into the unknown. We could hear the blessing that God promised to give to Abram. We could imagine ourselves in Abram's place, wondering what we should do. Would we have the courage and the faith that Abram had to act on God's promises and to go as Abram did?

Our Gospel invites us to go up a mountain with Jesus. Peter, James and John go up the mountain with us. To help our imagination we could choose a place that is familiar. Perhaps we can imagine ourselves climbing Mount Barker. We can see a lot from there. But today we are not looking down but looking up towards where Jesus is, walking on ahead of us. As we climb we remember that mountains are often places of mystery; places where God can be found, where the mystery of God is so often revealed to humankind.

We stand and watch in awe as the Jesus we know is transfigured. His form changes. His face, like the face of Moses when he had seen God, is too bright for us to look at. His clothes become as white as light. And with him are two of the great figures of the Old Testament, Moses and Elijah. They too had climbed mountains and seen God. We try to hear what they are saying now to Jesus; but we can only imagine that.

Peter is beside us and he is so caught up in what he sees that he wants to freeze the picture and hold onto it. He offers to build three tents, one for Jesus, one for Moses and one for Elijah. It is then that we become aware of the glory cloud that seems to enfold us. And it is from this cloud that we hear God speak, "This is my Son, the Beloved. He enjoys my favour". We have heard those words before. It was when Jesus was Baptised. But now something more is added. "Listen to him".

The next thing we know is the touch of Jesus' hand on our shoulder. When we dare to look up it is only Jesus who is there, looking just as we know him. As we walk down the mountain with him, he asks that we tell no one about what we have seen until he has risen from the dead.

We walk on in silence. We try to imagine what that experience must have meant for Jesus and we try to

unpack what it might mean for us. For Jesus to hear his Father say how well pleased he was in Him and how loved He was, must have been so important as he set his face towards Jerusalem. We know now that there would be so much darkness and pain ahead that Jesus needed to know that it would somehow end in glory. That glimpse of glory would help sustain the disciples too as they witnessed the rejection, suffering and death of the one in whom they put their hope.

We don't need to use our imagination to know that being a follower of Jesus means walking with him to the cross. The road that we are called to walk with Jesus is often dark and mysterious. We often wonder what is happening when we or those we love get struck down by illnesses. We are not spared the pain of losing those who are close to us. We wonder where God is when things don't work out as we hoped they would. It is then that we try to remember that Jesus did not promise to take away the pain and disappointments that are part of every human life. He just promised to walk with us in whatever situations we are asked to suffer. As people of faith and hope we know that the glory that belongs to Jesus will be ours one day.

But there are transfiguration moments along the way for us too. There may be times when we sense the presence of God with us in a powerful way. There may be times

when we are overcome by the beauty of God's creation. There may be times when we are told how loved we are by someone close to us. There may be times when we know for sure that we are a beloved son or daughter of God our Father. These moments of transfiguration may not last very long, but they become part of our memory. They become part of the memory of faith that we can draw upon when we feel the weight of the crosses we are bearing. We can remember those moments of light when darkness seems to close in on us.

When we remember how important those moments of transfiguration are to us then we might remember that we have the power to create transfiguration moments for others too. It may be something very simple that we say to give someone encouragement. It may be a word of thanks that wasn't expected. A transfiguration moment may come when we help someone see something good that they have never seen before. Those moments can give hope to people sharing that uncertain road of life that we are called to walk along together.