

# Sermon on the 2nd Sunday of Lent (B) (24<sup>th</sup>/25<sup>th</sup> february 2024)

*It is good that we are here;  
or: How Jesus can transform you*

*Mk 9:2-10*

## **Gospel of the day; from the holy Gospel according to Mark**

*<sup>2</sup> After six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, <sup>3</sup> and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no fuller on earth could bleach them. <sup>4</sup> Then Elijah appeared to them along with Moses, and they were conversing with Jesus. <sup>5</sup> Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, "Rabbi, it is good that we are here! Let us make three tents: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." <sup>6</sup> He hardly knew what to say, they were so terrified. <sup>7</sup> Then a cloud came, casting a shadow over them; then from the cloud came a voice, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him." <sup>8</sup> Suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone but Jesus alone with them. <sup>9</sup> As they were coming down from the mountain, he charged them not to relate what they had seen to anyone, except when the Son of Man had risen from the dead. <sup>10</sup> So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what rising from the dead meant.*

*"Rabbi, it is good that we are here!" (Mk 9:5) Peter says this to Jesus when he realises who he is dealing with here. "It is good that we are here!" Dear brothers and sisters, is that what we are saying this morning when we are here? It is good that we are here! Peter says his sentence out of a feeling of deep emotion, perhaps also out of enthusiasm, perhaps it was also a fear mixed*

in with it. And you: Have you been so touched by Jesus that you want to build a cabin for Him, just like Peter on the mountain? Have you had such an encounter with Jesus that you want to preserve this moment, just like Peter, James and John? "*Rabbi, it is good that we are here!*"

You probably know events in your life that you want to hold on to. There are experiences that you want to take with you into your everyday life. Whether it's the experience of a great journey or meeting your favourite person. These are situations in which we want to hold on to the moment. Stay in the moment, he is so beautiful. And the cabin we build is probably the camera or smartphone with which you want to capture that special, perfect moment. Just like Peter: his photos are the cabins he wants to build on the mountain.

But what made that moment so special?

First, probably that it was a particularly intimate moment: Jesus only takes his closest circle with him. The three disciples who were particularly close to him. Because they alone go up the mountain (cf. Mark 9:2). Jesus always goes up the mountain when he wants to be close to God - when he wants to be alone with God, whom he calls his Father. At least since the time of Moses, the mountain has been the place where God can be encountered (cf. Ex 19:3). The mountain is a place of closeness to God and intimacy with God. And Jesus lets his three friends into this special place.

And here the incredible happens: Jesus "was changed before them; his clothes became dazzling white [...]" (Mk 9:2-3) Jesus is still the same, but he appears different: radiantly white! In biblical texts, white often symbolises the divine, which can transform. "μετεμορφώθη" is the Greek word for metamorphosis - today we call the process when a caterpillar pupates and becomes a butterfly. μετεμορφώθη means taking a look behind things, behind the superficial and seeing the true essence. Like the butterfly in a simple caterpillar; like the Son of God in a simple man. Peter, James and John are allowed to take a look behind the superficiality of this Jesus: They see his closeness to God.

The white is not enough. You can also see that he is talking to two people who also experienced the closeness to God on that mountain: Moses and Elijah. And now also this Jesus, this man with whom they have travelled through the country for so long. A man of God - overwhelming. And Peter wants to capture this moment, hold on to it, because it is so great. What would it be like to capture the closeness of God?

But it is not yet time to retire, to settle down, to build three cabins. The story continues: on the mountain, where God speaks, the three disciples also hear Him, we hear Him here today: "This is my beloved Son; listen to him " (Mk 9:7). And then this divine moment is over, the view through the mirror is over. What remains is this Jesus, this simple man whom they know. They should listen to him, they should follow him. They will do so - how could they do otherwise after this wonderful experience on the mountain.

Dear brothers and sisters, it was not only in the days of Peter, James and John that it was possible to look beyond the superficial. We, you and I, can also have this experience. Sometimes we won't even be able to do it: Because these experiences of the sacred, the beautiful, the divine often connect with the very banal things. But then we will also have the feeling that the banal is special, that it is very real, that we want to hold on to the moment because it is so beautiful. Then we may have come close to this look behind the mirror. And we will keep these thoughts in our hearts. Because there - right there: in the heart - God touches us; there he reminds us of what he has created us for - you and me - to feel his love, to encounter his loving nature.

I believe that if you realise this closeness to God, then you don't need to be afraid. Paul once wrote: "If God is for us, who is against us?" (Romans 8:31) But the three of them first had to realise this certainty that Peter, James and John saw in Jesus on the mountain. On Easter Day, when they encountered the Risen Lord, they realised: God is on Jesus' side, then he will also be on our side. And the three of them probably remembered this scene on the mountain - this special moment. And that also transformed

them. They underwent a metamorphosis. A transformation from uncertainty to certainty, from fear to courage, from doubt to trust. They need have no fear, because God is already with them. In this way, they realised something that was already there from the very beginning when this Jesus took them with him: God is there in their lives - but it still had to be recognised. God is in your life - that is what needs to be discovered.

You and I are faced with this task. You and I stand before the mirror of our lives and seek this security. This security that has already been promised to us with our baptism. This security that we may sometimes lose sight of. But then it can help us if we remember those moments in our lives when our relationship with God, the Holy One, the Christ, the power of the spirit seemed transparent for the moment. Remember that! Remember the friends, the happiness, the emotion, the comfort. And you will realise how Christ transforms you through this knowledge. And you will realise how you can walk with courage into the tomorrow of your life - without worry, without fear - towards him.

By Deacon Thomas

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