

Most awesome, magnificent and powerful: this is God in the opening verses of John's gospel (last week's reading).

In today's reading from Mark's gospel the disciples witness an unrecognisable, divinely transfigured (supernaturally bright) Jesus speaking with Elijah and Moses. At first they are terrified.

We can all be tempted, perhaps, to try to make God fit more easily within the scope of our human comprehension. This is what happens to Peter. He wants to preserve the moment on the mountain by building shelters to house these perplexing characters, maybe hoping that, given time, things would become clearer.

The Transfiguration occurs halfway through Mark's gospel and marks an important turning point in Jesus' life. Now, knowing the presence of God with him, and hearing again the assurance that he is God's much-loved Son, he can set his face towards Jerusalem, to everything that awaits him there.

This gospel reading, like last week's gospel reading, has been carefully chosen. It's always the reading for the Sunday before Lent, the time when we prepare to walk with Jesus in the way of the cross. We may be wondering what to do during Lent: what to give up, what to take on, what to do to be a bit more intentional in the way we live out our Christian life.

We may long for an experience like that of Peter, James and John, a moment of wonder, to re-awaken our sense of God, and to inspire us in our journey of faith. It's important, especially during lockdown, to be reminded of those moments that take our breath away, even if they don't involve visions or voices from heaven. Perhaps it is a sunset, a symphony, a mountain. I loved hearing the entomologist George Mc Gavin describe on Desert Island Discs the moment when he realised that the spider dangling on its thread in front of his face was a new species.

We must cherish those moments of glory when our hearts are lifted. May they help us to hear the message of scripture anew. The voice from the cloud assures Jesus that he is God's beloved Son. We too are the precious sons and daughters of God.

Let us rediscover that good news this Lent in the steady day-to-day discipline of saying our prayers. It can be unglamorous. It can be hard work. Yet little by little praying creates an openness in us which is just that space in which God can speak and move and gradually bring about a transformation.

Then, in the words of today's collect, we may be given grace to perceive his glory and be changed into his likeness. **Amen.**