

Reflection for 26th September 2021

"Transforming People"

Mark 9: 2-9

2 Corinthians 4: 1-6

The Transfiguration of Jesus is normally celebrated in our churches on 6th August so that's not the reason we have had the reading from Mark's Gospel today. But if we link it to the message of Paul in his letter to the Corinthians I think there is at least one other message we can think about today.....and that is about revealing Jesus to the people we meet day by day at work, at home and at play....how we respond to the needs of the world; in other words, how we can be involved in transforming the world and people's lives, how we can be 'transforming people'.

In the reading from Mark we hear how Peter, James and John were led up to a high mountain by Jesus and right in front of them, to their utter amazement and as the story tells us to their terror, he was transfigured. For a second time God confirms Jesus as His chosen one whom he loved and who the people should listen to; the first occasion was of course on his baptism in the Jordan, by John - "This is my son in whom I am well pleased". As I have already remarked I don't wish to dwell on the meaning of the transfiguration today -that can wait for another occasion. I was us to look at what some of the actions of the disciples and those words of St Paul have to say to us here and now.

As we have heard, the disciples were not only impressed by what happened to Jesus at his transfiguration, they were overwhelmed and wanted to erect a 'dwelling' or as other translations put it, a tent, for each of the three - one for Moses, one for Elijah and one for Jesus. We might stop and wonder about our own faith and actions..... do we prefer to pitch our tents in places that people rarely visit? Is our own Christian life and witness seen by others? Surely our message about Jesus must not be hidden away in our churches or in the private recesses of our own lives. We cannot stay on top of the mountain and distance that wonderful message to somewhere people can't reach it or see it for themselves. We must not hide Jesus away.

The Good News has to be open and available to everyone who is willing to listen.....that is what the reading from Paul's letter is all about. He makes a very clear statement about faith and us: in 2 Corinthians Chapter 4 he says " we do not preach ourselves but Jesus Christ as Lord."

Sometimes, if we are not careful we can run the risk of talking about our own achievements instead of introducing people to the true message. After all, we are by nature people who have human frailties and can often be distracted from our goals. And yet, the wonder of it all is that God uses us to spread the Good News - can you believe that?

We can give others a glimpse of God and of Jesus through the way we speak and act and by the way we live our lives - and goodness knows we are living through some very challenging and changing times and many of us have been re-appraising our lives and how

we live. initially those disciples up on the mountain were so in awe of what they'd experienced, they wanted to stay where they were and live a different life but Jesus very clearly wanted them to return to REALITY! And as we know only too well in these "post covid days", returning to reality is proving very tricky for a fair few people!

In addition Jesus didn't want the disciples to try to explain to others what they'd experienced because he knew that as yet they would not understand the true significance of that transfiguration.....that realisation would not come to them until after his resurrection. What he is saying is " wait until you can tell the full story".

But we are a resurrection people and it is our mission to reveal Christ to the world around us - to help bring light into the darkness of people's lives and into our troubled, hurting world....to tell the full story.

So let us tell the story of a man who comes down from the mountain top , changed and ready and equipped to change people's lives. He wants to change lives in the here and now, at ground level, in the gutter, in the much and muddle of what is going on just outside our doors, in the ordinariness of everyday life; beyond the walls of this building - this 'tent or dwelling' - pitched in Old Walcot where we gather to gain the tools that we need, learning more and more of how to love as Jesus loved, to care as he cared, to challenge and to fight for justice and for peace.

Let us be the ones who can help to transform our society, ourselves and others for the better. So may God's will be done and the Kingdom come.

Amen