**Tuesday**

**Self-Sacrifice**



****

**Reflecting on:**

**“God’s Chosen One”**

**Reading:**

Luke 9: 28-36

**Other Readings:**

Genesis 15: 5-12, 17-18; Psalm 27: 1, 7-9, 13-14; Philippians 3: 17 – 4: 1

**1. Lectio:** Jesus chooses only his first three disciples – Peter, John and James – to climb a mountain with him for a prayer time. We don’t know how long Jesus prays but the disciples fall asleep. It appears that the disciples wake up just in time to witness the end of a remarkable encounter. Jesus’ clothes are now dazzling white and he is talking to Moses and Elijah

The appearance of Moses and Elijah is significant. Moses led the Exodus of God’s people out of slavery in Egypt and many Jews expected the prophet Elijah to return before the coming of the Messiah. They talk with Jesus about how he will soon fulfil god’s purpose through his death (or ‘exodus’, the literal meaning of Luke’s writing here) in Jerusalem. God’s salvation plan for humankind, bringing true and lasting deliverance, is being fulfilled in Jesus.

This experience may have strengthened Jesus for the testing days ahead that would culminate with his death on the cross. Luke makes no comment on this. What is clear is that God is present, as indicated by the cloud which veils his glory. As at Jesus’ baptism, God speaks. He affirms Jesus as his Son whom he has chosen. And this time God adds the instruction to the disciples to ‘listen to him’.

This event, together with the other miracles and teaching that surround it, gave the disciples glimpses of who Jesus was. But they needed to travel much further with Jesus. In fact they needed to meet him after the resurrection to really understand who he was and his mission on earth.

**2. Mediatatio:**

**\*** Imagine you were one of the disciples that witnessed this event. How might you have felt? What would you have learnt?

**\*** What has Jesus been chosen for? In what way does his death in Jerusalem fulfil God’s purpose?

**\*** In what way can you ‘listen to him’ as God told the disciples to do?

**\*** What is our experience of prayer? Do you find it as easy to listen to God as to talk to him?

**3. Oratio:**

Thank God each day this week for all the ways he has guided and saved you. Ask him to deepen your appreciation of his salvation for you.

Ask the Holy Spirit to overshadow you, to transform your life so that people around you notice something different about the way you live. Ask God to help you reflect more of Jesus to others.

**4. Contemplatio:**

Consider the glory of Jesus’ transfigured body. For Christians, St. Paul offers us a tremendous promise (See Philippians 3: 21)

Consider what it means that we are now ‘citizens of heaven’ (Philippians 3: 20).

**\* Prayer of the Day**

Almighty and merciful God,

I see with my own eyes the ugliness and shame

that we human beings, have done to ourselves and to one another.

I feel ashamed of doing something bad against You and my neighbours.

You want me to be holy and full of love.

You want me to love You and to be charitable towards others.

But sins have made my heart and mind impure,

and pride has caused my soul to fall away from You.

Give me courage to realise the ugliness of sin

and help me to love You and my brethren more and more. Amen.



**Reflecting on:**

**“Forgetting Self”**

**Readings:**

Luke 9: 18-24

**Other Readings:**

Zechariah 12: 10-11, 13: 1; Psalm 63: 1-5, 7-8; Galatians 3: 26-29

**1. Lectio:** In this passage, Jesus allows his disciples to know that he is indeed the Messiah. But he doesn’t want this revealed publicly yet. He also starts to show them that he is very different Messiah from the one they expected. In fact, he will be rejected by the very people who should have welcomed him most – the religious leaders. Even more shockingly he will be put to death. But three days later he will be raised back to life.

Jesus then talk about the cost of discipleship, ‘Anyone who wants to come with me must forget self, take up their cross every day, and follow me’ (verse 23). Jesus confronts the disciples with the tough reality. Being a Christian requires the daily choice of obeying god rather than following our own plans, even when this involves hardship and suffering. So whoever wants to be Jesus’ disciple must be ready to give their life for their faith.

It must have seemed a frightening prospect to the disciples. But Jesus explains his first saying with the second. *‘For whoever wants to save their own life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for my sake will save it’*. So while ultimately following Jesus is the only way to save our life, sacrifice and suffering is part and parcel of the process.

These few words must have left the disciples reeling! While Jesus is indeed the Messiah, the idea of him being put to death rather than delivering the Jews victoriously from their Roman oppressors would have been shocking.

They must also have wondered what they had got involved in. Much of the Old Testament taught them that God blesses the righteous; it is those who disobey God that experience suffering. Where would following Jesus lead them?

Following Jesus involves putting his will and kingdom first whatever the cost or consequences to us personally.

**2. Meditatio:**

**\*** Today and throughout history, people have had different ideas about Jesus. Who do think he is?

**\*** Consider how Jesus unites the idea of a suffering Messiah with that of a suffering disciple. How do you respond to suffering in your life?

**\*** What does it mean in practical terms for you to lose your life and take up your cross daily? In which areas of your life do you find it hardest to do what God wants rather than what you want?

**3. Oratio:**

Read Psalm 62: 2-6, 6-8 several times.

Do these verses express how you feel? Use them for an honest conversation with God. What strikes you most? Maybe God wants you to bring it to him in prayer.

**4. Contemplatio:**

Sit and contemplate a crucifix for a while today. Think about all it symbolises and its relevance for you. What does Jesus death and resurrection change?

**\* Prayer of the Day**

Almighty and merciful God,

I see with my own eyes the ugliness and shame

that we human beings, have done to ourselves and to one another.

I feel ashamed of doing something bad against You and my neighbours.

You want me to be holy and full of love.

You want me to love You and to be charitable towards others.

But sins have made my heart and mind impure,

and pride has caused my soul to fall away from You.

Give me courage to realise the ugliness of sin

and help me to love You and my brethren more and more. Amen.

