

Readings

2 Corinthians 4:3-6

³And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake. ⁶For it is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness', who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Mark 9:2-9

The Transfiguration

²Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, ³and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. ⁴And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. ⁵Then Peter said to Jesus, 'Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.' ⁶He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. ⁷Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, 'This is my Son, the Beloved, listen to him!' ⁸Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them anymore, but only Jesus.

The Coming of Elijah

⁹As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

Reflection

Saint Mark's Gospel is fast paced – moving us quickly from one thing to the next as we bound through the Good News. By the time we get to today's reading we have already covered much ground; parables, miracles, teaching and healing. But only just before today's reading, Jesus has foretold of his own death and resurrection and he has "called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.'" (Mk 8:34)

Today's reading comes six days later. Jesus takes Peter, James and John to witness the most amazing sight. On the high mountain, with no one else around, Jesus is transfigured. Jesus' clothes become amazingly white, Elijah and Moses appear and talk with Jesus. The disciples are terrified.

A cloud surrounds them and from this cloud they hear "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!" (vs 7) but when they look around there is no one there but Jesus. Jesus then tells them not to tell anyone about this until "after the Son of Man had risen from the dead" (vs 9)

What!? What on earth was this supposed to mean to the disciples!? All this amazing activity, then talk of death and resurrection and picking up crosses to follow Jesus, a break for a few days before an incredible yet terrifying event – a glimpse of glory confirming Jesus as Messiah and yet, Jesus then says to tell no one until after a forthcoming event that they cannot even begin to comprehend. How utterly bewildering.

I heard a phrase the other day which I thought was really helpful, someone described the recent passing of time as 'the days are going slowly but the weeks are going quickly.' I thought that this summed up the last year well. Time has seemed distorted. Messages have been confusing; stay in, go out, 'eat out to help out', take away only, the end's in sight – by spring, by summer, by autumn. Glimpses of glory but so much heartache. It can be utterly bewildering at the moment.

Like those first disciples, we too can be confused; we see, we hear, we faithfully witness but we cannot always comprehend. Messages are not always boomed out from the sky for us. But also, just like those first disciples, we are not alone. Verse 8 from today's reading tells us "Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them anymore, but only Jesus." No one but Jesus. Despite the confusion, the mixed messages and glimpses of glory Jesus was right there with those disciples, and Jesus is always right here with us.

Jesus doesn't get lost in the muddle or run away from the mess. Jesus was right there in the thick of it with those disciples and Jesus is right here in the thick of it with us. We have taken up our crosses, followed into the unknown and now we may be; lost, confused, uncertain, anxious, bewildered yet perhaps seeing glimpses of glory. However bewildering things are for *us* at the moment, I pray that we can hold on to that truth that in the midst of the everything and the nothing – there is no one but Jesus.

Amen.