

Lent 2 B

One day a man was walking through a field, deep in meditation and reflection. He stood in awe before a huge oak tree, reflecting on the tiny acorns lying on the ground. These had fallen off in the wind. He then looked across the fence at a huge field of pumpkins - each one growing on a tiny vine plant. Suddenly he had a thought: 'God made a mistake, surely! Why should the huge pumpkins be on tiny vines while the tiny acorns grow on a huge oak tree? It doesn't make any sense'. Just then there was a gust of wind and a tiny acorn fell from the oak tree and plump! - it hit him straight on the head. He smiled a why smile and said 'Maybe God knew what he was doing, after all'.

Yes, God can appear to be behind the strangest of things. Take the case of **Abraham**. He was asked to sacrifice his only son Isaac. Surely in this case God must have made a mistake. He must have forgotten he'd just promised Abraham numerous descendants. However, Abraham doesn't question God but goes along with Him. His steadfast faith in God's promises is rewarded. The angel stays the hand of Abraham as he is about to sacrifice his only son. In contrast God does "not spare his own Son but gave him up to benefit us all".

Last Sunday we saw where Jesus Himself was put to the test in the wilderness. What was at the root of these temptations? Believe it or not I think that the Tempter had pinned his hopes on Jesus turning in anger against His Father when confronted with the shame of the Cross. Yes, Jesus did say in Gethsemane " Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass me by" but to the disappointment of Satan, he added: "not as I will but as thou wilt."

A few years ago do you remember the ad on telly for British **Gas?** When the guy in the ad clicked his fingers a blue flame appeared at the top of his thumb, while he said: 'don't you just

love being in control'. Most of us do. Sometimes we're tempted even to control God and tell Him what to do. God can sometimes, metaphorically speaking, **tug at the rug** under our feet in the hope that we entrust ourselves more fully into his arms. But for some it has the opposite effect – when their faith is tested they turn their backs on God altogether.

Abraham made that leap of faith when at God's invitation he was even willing to sacrifice His only Son. So also did **Moses** and **Elijah**. At God's bidding and against all odds, Moses led his people out of Egypt against all the odds. Elijah risked his life in clashing with the wicked Queen Jezebel when stamping out the worship of Baal, a false God which she had promoted in Israel. That is why Moses and Elijah are standing shoulder to shoulder with Jesus on Mount Tabor. Tradition has it that, like Jesus, they were taken up in glory at the end of their lives – a fitting reward for their unwavering fidelity.

We imitate these three great worthies of the Old Testament, Abraham, Moses and Elijah when we willingly allow God despite the difficulties to mould and fashion our lives into the image of Jesus His Son. In this way transfiguration awaits us too.