

Lent 2 B

One day a man was walking through a field, deep in 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! - hit him straight on the head. He smiled a rather wry smile and thought '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 see God's request as outrageous as he might have done, but in steadfast faith embraces it. He's similar to Mary who found the conception of Jesus a bit of an enigma at first but then falls in line with God's plan by saying to the Angel Gabriel 'let what you have said be done to me'. Abraham's steadfast faith in God's promises is rewarded. He's not called 'our father in faith' for nothing. The angel calls a halt when Abraham is about to sacrifice his only son. But in stark contrast God does "not spare his own Son but gave him up to benefit us all".

Last Sunday we saw where Jesus's faith was put to the test in the Desert. In one of the temptations Satan promised that Jesus could hold sway over all the Kingdoms of the world if falling down on his knees he adored him. This was swiftly rebuffed because if he did that, it would conflict with what Jesus said to Pilate - that his Kingdom was not of this world.

To test our faith God sometimes, metaphorically speaking, can tug at the rug under our feet in the hope that we entrust ourselves and our destiny more fully into his hands. But for some it has the opposite effect – when their faith is tested they turn their backs on God altogether.

That brings us to the Transfiguration. Moses and Elijah who appeared with Jesus on Mt Tabor were also men of steadfast faith. Against all the odds and fraught with great danger, Moses led his people out of Egypt – a gigantic task. Elijah risked his life by stamping out pagan worship in Israel which the deranged queen Jezebel had promoted. That is why we find these two stalwarts standing shoulder to shoulder with Jesus on Mount Tabor. This preview of the Resurrection was also meant for Peter, James and John whose faith needed a boost at this time considering there were dark days ahead.

We imitate these three great worthies of the Old Testament Abraham, Moses and Elijah when we show we have faith by allowing God to take full control of our lives and mould us into the persons he wants us to be. By so doing transfiguration awaits us too.