

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

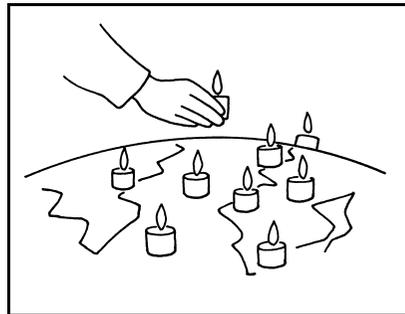
1. How did you feel when reflecting on Pope Francis' invitation to have a personal encounter with Jesus every day?
2. Do we feel reluctant to talk about our personal experience of prayer? Do we feel we're not very good at it?
3. What opportunities are there already in your community for learning to pray and for growing in prayer? What else could be offered?
4. Can you think of people who reflect the light of God's goodness to you?

Practical Evangelisation

Peter, James and John had their special encounter with Jesus when they took time out from their daily concerns. Take some extra time this week, not to say prayers, but to stop and ponder the people who reflect the light of God's goodness to you, then find an opportunity to talk to someone about that experience.

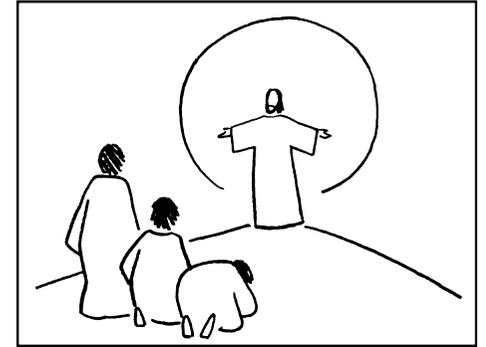
Prayer

God of glory,
may our eyes be opened to glimpse
your glory all around us
in the goodness that fills our world.
May we see it in gift of the creation
in which we live,
in the brothers and sisters
who walk with us,
and in those who with whom
we have an encounter each day.
May we look for goodness all around us
and share goodness with those who are
looking for reasons for living and hoping.
Amen.



The Joy of the Gospel: Walking through Lent with Pope Francis

Second Sunday of Lent: The Transfiguration



Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain where they could be alone. There in their presence he was transfigured: his face shone like the sun and his clothes became as white as the light. Suddenly Moses and Elijah appeared to them; they were talking with him. Then Peter spoke to Jesus, 'Lord', he said, 'it is wonderful for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.' He was still speaking when suddenly a bright cloud covered them with shadow, and from the cloud there came a voice which said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; he enjoys my favour. Listen to him.' When they heard this, the disciples fell on their faces, overcome with fear. But Jesus came up and touched them. 'Stand up,' he said, 'do not be afraid.' And when they raised their eyes they saw on one but only Jesus.

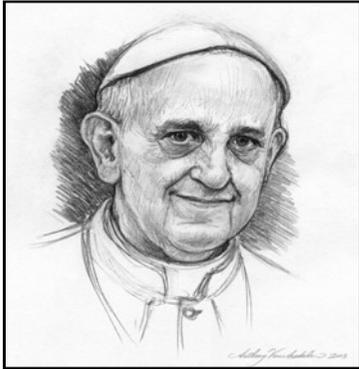
Matthew 17:1-9

Peter, James and John had an encounter with Jesus as they had never seen him before and it filled them with joy and wonder.

The elements of this experience were:

- they were alone with Jesus on a high mountain;
- his face and clothes shone with light;
- he was with Moses and Elijah, embodying the Law and the Prophets;
- they heard the voice of the Father say 'This is my beloved Son, listen to him'.

Pope Francis insists that we can experience the wonder of a personal encounter with Jesus, and it will transform our lives, filling us with a joy we cannot help but share.



To ponder: The disciples were filled with joy during this new experience of the presence of Christ.

Pope Francis reflects:

The joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ joy is constantly born anew. [1] I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed

personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day. No one should think that this invitation is not meant for him or her, since “no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord”. [3]

Question: Can I recall a time when I experienced a personal encounter with Jesus? What were the circumstances? How can I open myself to that experience every day?

To ponder: If you have the joy of Jesus in your heart, please let your face know!

Pope Francis reflects :

An evangelizer must never look like someone who has just come back from a funeral! Let us recover and deepen our enthusiasm, that “delightful and comforting joy of evangelizing, even when it is in tears that we must sow... And may the world of our time, which is searching, sometimes with anguish, sometimes with hope, be enabled to receive the good news not from evangelizers who are dejected, discouraged, impatient or anxious, but from ministers of the Gospel whose lives glow with fervour, who have first received the joy of Christ”. [10] (quoting Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 1975)

Question: When have I seen the joy of the Gospel on someone’s face? What helps me to overcome feelings of dejection or discouragement?

To ponder: People are sometimes put off the Church because of the way its representatives behave. At other times, they may be drawn in by the warmth of our welcome.

Pope Francis reflects :

Christians have the duty to proclaim the Gospel without excluding anyone. Instead of seeming to impose new obligations, they should appear as people who wish to share their joy, who point to a horizon of beauty and who invite others to a delicious banquet. It is not by proselytizing that the Church grows, but “by attraction”. [15]

Question: Do I know anyone who feels they have been hurt or rejected by the church? What would help them to feel welcome again?

To ponder: Seeing Jesus in glory helped Peter, James and John to cope with the traumatic events that would happen later. Our encounters with Jesus can give us hope too.

Pope Francis reflects:

Christ, risen and glorified, is the wellspring of our hope, and he will not deprive us of the help we need to carry out the mission which he has entrusted to us. [275]

Christ’s resurrection is not an event of the past; it contains a vital power which has permeated this world. Where all seems to be dead, signs of the resurrection suddenly spring up. It is an irresistible force. Often it seems that God does not exist: all around us we see persistent injustice, evil, indifference and cruelty. But it is also true that in the midst of darkness something new always springs to life and sooner or later produces fruit. On razed land life breaks through, stubbornly yet invincibly. However dark things are, goodness always re-emerges and spreads. Each day in our world beauty is born anew, it rises transformed through the storms of history. [276]

Question: When have I found hope in the midst of suffering or darkness? What signs of new life can encourage people today?
