

How many faces?

Exodus 34^{29-end}; Psalm 99; 2 Corinthians 3¹²⁻⁴²; Luke 9²⁸⁻³⁶

*And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another
[2 Corinthians 3¹⁸]*

How many faces do you have? I think we are all guilty of having more than one!

The readings for today pick up on the Transfiguration - when Jesus whole appearance changed when he was on the mountain accompanied by Peter, James and John.

- ✦ If you ever needed an example of when prayer changes things, this is it (you did note that Jesus was praying)!
- ✦ Not only did Jesus transform, but he seen in the company of Moses and Elijah - the one represented the law and the other represented the prophets (everything that mattered to a Jew).
- ✦ If that wasn't enough, at the end of the story, God is heard to speak and confirms **This is my Son, my chosen, listen to him!**

If you had been there, what would you have done?

The event had been enough to keep the disciples, who it says **were weighed down with sleep**, awake!

Peter, always the first to put his foot in his mouth, states the obvious:

Master, it is good for us to be here!

Then he does what so many have done since (especially in this Church - look around you) and suggests that they set the moment in stone by putting a memorial up: **let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.**

But a memorial refers to something that is dead! And faith isn't dead!

Certainly Jesus is turning towards Jerusalem and his death (which is why we have these readings today as we prepare for Lent and we too turn towards Jerusalem) - but this isn't about death its about life!

Luke has already said about Peter that he didn't know what he was speaking about. As the **cloud** then descended the disciples were **terrified** - for the cloud was always the symbol of God's presence and at the time it was believed that no-one could see God and live!

Eventually, **they kept silence** as there was nothing that needed to be said.

That' fear of death is why in the reading from Exodus **people were afraid to come near Moses**. He had been in God's presence and it showed on his face - it too was shining!

It was too much for those who were around Moses, and they put a bag over his head for their own benefit! Moses was transformed by being in God's presence, but it was second-hand for the Hebrew's in the desert.

From the story of the Exodus it seems like they were covering Moses up - but also shutting God out!

Paul picks up the theme of the veil - he states that **their minds were hardened**. The veil was **over their minds** and they could not share in what came next.

- ✦ They were like Peter and his colleagues - they wanted to fossilise the past and live in it, but God isn't kept in the past.
- ✦ The **Spirit of the Lord...is freedom**. And as a result of that we **are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another**.
- ✦ The more we reflect Jesus in our faces the better it becomes. And we don't have to put a bag over our head to hide it: when we are transformed it is Jesus people see and that is good for them.

We don't put a bag over our heads when we leave Church - although perhaps we should need to if we have found God in this place. However, there are those who are quite happy to put their Church face away and put another face on for their family or for their work or for their friends. Like Peter, they are tempted to make an idol and keep faith in one place - a place where it doesn't follow them into the rest of their life.

How many faces do you have?