

There are two young caterpillars, sitting on a leaf, munching reflectively away at it. A beautiful butterfly flutters past... one caterpillar watches it with curiosity, thinks for a moment and says to the other 'Nah, you'd never catch me going up in one of those'... [pause]

As humans, we are often inherently suspicious or resistant to change – perhaps like those caterpillars. The Church, is almost a caricature of resistance to change in any form!

Not just one, but all of our readings today allude to change; Moses becoming visibly changed through being in God's presence... and Jesus being transfigured before his disciples; we heard 'And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white.' Both men became literally radiant, from encountering God. The Orthodox Church call this radiance 'uncreated light'.

Would that we could be changed in this way! Or maybe we are? ... After all, we read 'Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God'. It was only when others saw him, and were afraid as they had never seen anything quite like it before, that he became aware of this.

Rowan Williams writes, in a reflection on an icon of the Transfiguration (I would warmly invite you google one of these icons!) that 'Looking at Jesus seriously changes things; if we do not want to be changed, it is better not to look too hard or too long'.

But do we actually want to change and grow? Is it better to stay on our leaf as a caterpillar, and forgo the colourful freedom and beauty of being a butterfly?

Change can be costly, perhaps taking us out of our familiar safe zones and making us feel a bit

uncomfortable at first, as we are 'stretched' to accommodate what is new. But it tends to lead to growth - the other alternative being stagnation.

I wonder if we can think of any experiences that have changed us - or, if you like, mini Transfigurations, of our own? Experiences that have given us a fresh glimpse of God, or ourselves as made in God's image? ... or maybe we have suddenly seen the world, or other people, as God might view them?

When I was on my placement over the last few weeks, there was something that really struck me about the patients I saw in all parts of the hospital. I was powerfully aware of how vulnerable and unique each unwell person was; each person had their own story, their own pain, and perhaps most importantly, their own individual value and precious worth as human

beings, who deserved to be treated with respect and dignity. I wonder whether this might reflect a tiny facet of the way we are all viewed by God? When Moses realised how he looked, he put a veil over his face - presumably he was 'scarily radiant' to everyone else! But he removed the veil when speaking to God - he was effectively 'naked'; he could be utterly and truly himself before God. And so can we. [pause]. We do not have to use certain words or a special formula in order to 'get through' or to please God. It's absolutely fine to be angry with God, if that's how we're feeling! Or to tell God we're not 100% sure if we believe.

Veils can be protective (some people here may know the beautifully haunting piece, The Protecting Veil, by John Tavener). Just as they can shield others from us, so they can be a kind of wall to hide safely behind, either consciously or subconsciously.

There may also be veils that act as barriers preventing us from becoming the people God wants us to be. What might our veils be, I wonder? Feelings of uncertainty or unworthiness? Busy-ness?

In the gospel, we heard about the disciples 'since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory'. Staying awake, requires shedding any veils. We would see more of God's glory, if we stayed more spiritually awake. I believe that every day is potentially filled with transfigurative moments, glimpses of God, if we are awake to see them.

It was our patronal festival on Friday. St David was believed to have once said to his fellow monks 'do the little things which you have heard from me'. It can be hard to recognise these 'little things'. We tend to more readily notice the

'big' things, and feel that these are what really count. But St David is saying that the 'little' things can be transformative to others - and to ourselves... compassion, kindness, a smile or a word of encouragement...

With Lent starting in just 3 days, this might be a good opportunity to ponder and put into place 'little things' that can help bring about transformation in ourselves and in others, as we journey with Christ and one another, towards Good Friday and Easter Day.

In the Lent Bible studies, we will be touching on the idea of a Rule of Life; a structure that is unique for each of us, to sustain us spiritually, consisting of small 'tweaks' in our daily lives. I would really encourage you to join one of the groups if you haven't already, to learn more!

It is no coincidence that in our Gospel, transfiguration occurs after prayer; Jesus had

gone up the mountain with Peter, John and James, specifically to PRAY. We are not called to be 'experts' at prayer (whatever that may be!) but to pray, to engage with God, in ways that we find natural for us.

John Chapman, a Benedictine Monk, was well known for his advice; 'Pray as you can, not as you cannot'. [pause]

Whether it's gazing at an icon, a sunset, a candle, sitting in silence before God, walking a labyrinth, praying the Jesus Prayer, using prayers written by others that seem to say just what we mean...there are very, very many different ways to pray, and no one-size fits all.

As we pray and spend time with God, we can take courage from Paul's words from our second reading: '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'.

Let us pray:

Lord, may we, this Lent and beyond, see you with unveiled faces.

Keep us 'awake' to the 'little' things, in our awareness of you and in our actions, that we may ever be transformed into your likeness, and become the people you would have us be.

Amen