

## **Second Sunday of Lent**

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

Jesus performed many miracles during his public ministry: he healed the sick, he cast out evil spirits, he multiplied loaves and fishes so that the crowd who had come to hear him speak in a desert environment have nourishment, and on three occasions he is credited with bringing those who had died back to life. He is rarely himself the subject of a miracle. We are told that he walked on the water, that he was spirited away from an angry crowd on the brow of a hill outside of his native town of Nazareth, but there is little else out of the ordinary in Jesus' life.

The gospel reading on the second Sunday of Lent each year presents us with a story which does relate an event where the natural and the transcendent encounter one another and where Jesus is himself perceptible in both his humanity and in his divinity. The evangelists tell us Jesus was *transfigured*. The audience of this miracle was very select. The disciples Peter, James and John, that same trio which was to witness his agony some time later in the garden on the Mount of Olives, were fleetingly witness to the miraculous transformation of the body of their master. The event of the transfiguration was one which looked forward to two futures: one was the imminent death of Jesus, the second was to his triumph over death through his resurrection. Jesus requested his three disciple-witnesses to tell no one of what they had seen until after he had risen from the dead. Only then would they fully understand what they had seen. Only then would they appreciate that they were privileged witnesses to a fleeting foretaste of what Jesus would look like once his divinity became transparent through resurrection so as to strengthen them for his forthcoming passion and so that they would understand the continuity between the earthly Jesus, their master and friend, and the risen Lord whom very soon all those who accepted him as Saviour would call Christ.

We all need encouragement during Lent. Ten days into the penitential season it is understandable that our spirits should flag, our resolutions should begin to wilt. So the transfiguration story is inserted by the Church in the liturgy at this relatively early stage precisely to lift our spirits, to boost our hopes and to stiffen our resolve to walk the walk with Jesus, through his Passion right through to the glorious dawn of his Resurrection.

**Father Patrick**