

*I trusted, even when I said: 'I am sorely afflicted,'* Words from today's psalm.

Trust. At school once, aged 12 or 13, our drama teacher asked us to carry out a trust exercise. That's when you close your eyes and allow yourself to fall backwards, into the arms of some of your friends. It is difficult to trust people to not let you fall to the ground. Eventually, you commit yourself to trusting your friends, and they do indeed catch you. But in a TikTok video I saw, someone had misunderstood the task, and fell forwards instead of backwards, flat on his face. No doubt leaving him with a few trust issues. God will not allow us to fall flat on our faces. Unless with good reason.

The second reading encourages us to trust in God: *With God on our side who can be against us?* I'm sure Abraham in the first reading knew this. The Lord asked Abraham to offer his son in sacrifice, and Abraham was willing to do so. The Lord would never have let Abraham go through with the slaughter of his son, but the story has given us Abraham's great example of trust in God. If it seems the Lord is giving you a hard time, or asking too much, it could be that the God's plan for you involves a test, so you can be a stronger disciple in the end. Trust Him. *With God on our side who can be against us?*

God is utterly trustworthy, but it can take His people some time to build trust in Him. In St Mark's gospel, a chapter prior to today's gospel reading, we hear St Peter, chief apostle, not trusting Jesus. He was refusing to accept that Jesus would one day have to be arrested and crucified. In return he got a stern telling off from the Lord for not trusting in the Lord's saving plan. Peter had witnessed many miracles, including feeding the 5000, but still could not trust. But Jesus had a wonderful plan to bring Peter, James and John into his trust. Jesus would share a wonderful experience with them. They would be amazed and dazzled by His Transfiguration, that the gospel described to us.

Let me ask you: can you remember a time when you saw goodness and beauty that you never saw before, and you were deeply moved? It could be the beauty of nature: a river, a lake or the ocean, a sunrise, a sunset or the stars in a clear night sky. At a particular moment, and completely unexpectedly; you could say to yourself what St Peter said at the Transfiguration: it is wonderful for me to be here.

Sometimes our experience of 'transfiguration' happens in prayer. It may occur when we are

praying alone, when we drop into an empty church, at Mass, at a prayer meeting or on a pilgrimage. We experience a deep peace, a sense that God is present and loves and accepts us. A transforming experience.

It may be words that are transfiguring. Something a family member or a friend says, strikes home in a way that person could never have imagined. Or a passage from the Bible which I have heard many times before, but which suddenly comes alive; I can hear my life story in those words.

Young children have moments of amazement more often than adults because they have not lost their sense of wonder. A child may call out: 'Look, Mummy, look!' The child may be on her knees looking at a beetle or a flower or a pool of water, and can sense what adults often cannot sense: that everything in God's creation is a wonder. Let us remain on the mountain with Jesus for a moment. Contemplate Jesus all glowing, all radiant. It is good to be with our friend, Jesus, and to get to know him more. We've spoken to him at length on the mountain path. Walking with him this far has transformed us, now we bask in the reflected light of the sight in the night.

It takes time to get to know a person. The longer we know a person the more we trust them. It took the apostles a long time to get to know Jesus and to trust him fully. They trusted him when they saw the marvellous sight on the mountain. They would trust him some more during the Last Supper, his agony in Gethsemane, his Passion, death and resurrection. On our Christian journey, we have moments of becoming lost in wonder among God's beautiful creation. We also gradually grow in our love and trust and knowledge of Our Creator God and understanding what Jesus is asking of us. We could say that is what Lent is all about, forming and reforming our attitudes and our thinking so that we can see Jesus more clearly. During this season of Lent we examine our lives to see where we stand before God and each other. *With God on our side, who can be against us.*

*Let us speak to our Transfigured Lord now in a moment of prayer:* Lord Jesus Christ, on the mountain you became radiant in the presence of your friends Peter, James and John. We, gathered in Downside Abbey today, ask for our eyes to be continually opened to your light. In the reflection of your light, Lord Jesus, help us to become radiant like you. Jesus our Lord - shine through our hearts, shine through the darkness. Jesus I trust in you. AMEN.