

Lately, adults around the country have been mystified by the viral popularity of two numbers. They are: six-seven. In fact, these numbers have been banned in some schools; don't worry, there are plenty more numbers to choose from. Our Prime Minister caused chaos in a primary school class recently, by moving his hands whilst uttering the numbers – but the children were not allowed to say them, *so* distracting had this trend become during lessons. What does it mean? Geoffrey Chaucer in the fourteenth century used the phrase: *to set the world on six and seven* – meaning to risk one's life. And Shakespeare's Richard III in 1595: *Time will not permit: and everything is left at six and seven*. HG Wells, Gilbert and Sullivan, and even Andrew Lloyd Webber in the song *Don't cry for me Argentina* spoke of sixes and sevens. But I decided to investigate where these numbers might lead us in Scripture, and during Lent.

If you turn your hymn book to number 67, what do we find? *When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory died*. Immediately, we are brought to the Cross – and to glory. Jesus died on the first Good Friday, the sixth day of the week, and lay in the tomb on the seventh. On the first day of the week, Jesus rose in glory. The Cross led to glory through the sixth and seventh days.

In Genesis, on the sixth day, human beings were formed from the dust of the earth. On another sixth day, centuries later, Christ was laid in the dust of the earth. The first Adam stretched out his hand toward the tree; the new Adam stretched out his hands upon the tree of the Cross. The seventh day in Genesis is the Sabbath, when God rested from his work of creation. On Holy Saturday, the body of Christ rested in the tomb, the work of redemption complete.

Lent asks us to live somewhere between those days. On the sixth day, Christ stretched out his hands upon the Cross. On the seventh, the stone was rolled across the tomb. The hymn calls him the Prince of Glory even as it surveys the Cross. That pairing is not accidental. Cross and glory belong together. This is what Peter, James and John had to learn.

Six days before the Transfiguration, Jesus had told them that he must suffer and die. The Cross had been announced. Then, on the mountain, his face shone like the sun. Moses and Elijah stood beside him. The cloud overshadowed them. And the Father's voice declared: *This is my beloved Son. Listen to him*. The wonderful light was not an escape from the Cross. It revealed who would endure it.

The disciples saw his glory before they saw his wounds. They heard the Father's love before they witnessed the world's rejection. They were given a glimpse of who Jesus truly is, so that when the sixth and seventh days came, they would know that the suffering was not defeat.

St Matthew tells us that when they heard the voice from heaven, in chapter 17 verses six and seven, they fell on their faces and were afraid. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, *Rise, and have no fear.*

He says the same to us. We hear that there is no glory without the Cross, and that can unsettle us. We prefer success and we want to enjoy security and certainty. Yet Christ touches us with his grace, especially in the sacraments. He enables us in our smallness to stand up and give glory and honour to the Father; through, with and in him. Standing with no fear, in humble trust.

The same voice that spoke on the mountain would later speak from the Cross. The same hands that touched the disciples in light would be nailed in darkness. Nothing of his glory was lost. It was hidden.

Lent teaches us to see that pattern. We do not move from Cross to glory as though they were opposites. We pass through the Cross into revealed glory. The sixth day leads into the seventh, and beyond them stands the first day of the week, when Christ rose from the dead.

The Transfiguration is given to us so that we do not misunderstand the Cross. The one who hangs there is the beloved Son. The Prince of Glory does not cease to be glorious when he suffers. His glory is made perfect in obedience and love. *Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life my all.*

So we listen to the beloved Son. We follow him down the mountain as well as up. We live the sixth day with faith, and we wait in the seventh with trust, knowing that suffering does not have the final word.

And so we adore him.

*We adore you O Christ and we bless you, because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.*