

Second Sunday in Lent: Choose to listen The Transfiguration

Readings: Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18, Psalm 27, Philippians 3:17-4:1
Gospel Luke 9:28-36, (37-43)

Focus

Eden – Hope for the Hungry Mind. This is a story about how a vision to help a local community, through establishing a library, has a profound impact on the life of one African family.

Education is often the pathway out of poverty yet many millions of people around the world do not fail to achieve education from choice, or from lack of capacity. What usually happens is that the resources they need – resources we take for granted – simply do not exist in their communities. When the Anglican Church responded to a need in their local community, they opened the doors not only of a library, but to a future full of hope for children like Eden, who can now dream of a better future.



Hope for the Hungry Mind. ABM has helped provide a library for children such as Eden in Ethiopia.

Sentence

Then from the cloud came a voice that said:
“This is my Son, my Chosen; Listen to Him”.

Reflection

The reading for today is the story of Jesus’ transfiguration on the mountain. Here we have quite a different image of God from the warm wings of the hen – an overshadowing cloud that makes Jesus’ disciples feel quite terrified. But in both readings Jesus is essentially alone, and there is the sense of his imminent departure from his friends, from his earthly life. But this reading on the transfiguration is also about listening. Jesus goes up to the mountain to pray, to listen to God. And God responds that Jesus is God’s son, and that the disciples should therefore listen to him. Listening to God, listening to each other, listening to our hearts. It is not always easy to listen, to truly listen to what another is saying to us. Let us this Lent choose truly to listen to another, and not to assume that we know what they are going to say, or that we have heard it all before. When engaging in mission, this is possibly the most important aspect – that we listen to others, that we really try to hear what others are saying to us, and that we don’t try to project our own values and desires onto them.

LENT 2

Affirmation

We believe in a listening God who listened to His people in the wilderness. We believe in God’s Son, Jesus Christ, who speaks to us.

We Believe in God’s Son, Jesus Christ, who speaks through Scripture, and who truly listened to those he met in daily life, and who listens to our prayers.

We believe in the holy Spirit who speaks to us in the depth of our hearts, if only we would hear.

Intercessions

Leader: Loving God, listen to the prayers of our hearts.

Congregation: And create in us a spirit of listening.

Loving God, we pray for a world which listens to the poor and marginalised. Inspire our leaders to truly listen to the people they serve, so that they may gain wisdom and compassion. **L.C.**

Loving God, we pray for the leaders of your church. Give them a strong sense of your mission, and the means for engaging with others. Help them to listen to you and to discern your purpose in the parishes and dioceses that they lead or where ever they have influence. **L.C.**

Loving God, we pray for our communities, and for communities everywhere. May all communities be built on and strengthened by love, which comes from you. May communities everywhere be inspired to reach out to bring others into their midst, and to be generous and hospitable to all. Help us to listen to each other in love and in true friendship. **L.C.**

Loving God, we pray for the needy and sick, both in our own communities and in those with whom ABM works. We pray for those whose material poverty means living with the distress of diseases such as malaria, dysentery, tuberculosis, diabetes, skin sores and parasites, and dying from conditions that would be quickly treated in our own hospitals – appendicitis, the complications of childbirth, infection and injuries. And we pray for all those who work to prevent and treat illness among the countries served by ABM’s partners, and in Australian Indigenous communities. **L.C.**

Loving God, we give thanks for your servants in every age, and we particularly thank you for those people who have worked as part of your mission in many places, both those who have worked in their own lands and those who worked in distant lands. May they, with all your saints, enjoy at last your heavenly kingdom. **L.C.**

Response/Action

Think: When next I hear of a friend or relative, or when I myself go to hospital to have an operation that will most likely, save their life, I will think about those people in remote parts of the world who have no chance of getting to effective hospital treatment, and for whom an attack of appendicitis, or a slight complication during childbirth, could mean death.

Remember: Our God is a God who listens, and who sent Jesus so that we might listen to Him. How can we practise listening to Jesus, listening to the Spirit and listening to others this week?

Give: Could I make a gift to ABM this week towards their work overseas or in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities? **Read:** The ABM website (www.abmission.org) to see what projects are being supported by the Australian church. How can I become more involved in this work?

LENT 2 STUDY GROUP QUESTIONS

Jesus said: "How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!" (Luke 13:34)

As you watch the ABM DVD 'Hope for the Hungry Mind', think about these questions:

- What does what Jesus is saying in the gospel sentence above mean for us in terms of our concept of "community"?
- One of the ABM "Five Marks of Mission" is to "Stand in solidarity with the poor and needy". How does this saying of Jesus in Luke 13:34 guide us in this respect? Make a list of examples of what it means to stand in solidarity with someone, particularly someone helped by one of ABM's projects.
- The sentence is also about touch – the warmth of the touch and shelter of a hen with her chicks, and, by implication, the warm touch from one human being to another. We are warned a lot about "not touching" or "inappropriate touching" in our modern society, and yet here, from our Lord, is a wonderful example of "safe touching". In what circumstances might it be a good thing to touch someone? When might it be inappropriate? Do we allow others to embrace us, or do we stiffen and hold back our own affections?
- Jesus' love for us is unconditional from his perspective. It seems that it is only we who "are not willing" to be loved, to be gathered in. Do we receive people unconditionally? Do we allow ourselves to be "gathered together" in God's community? Do we truly listen to others?
- People in many parts of the world have only the most basic forms of shelter. In some places, beset by wars or ethnic tensions, or vulnerable to the effects of climate change, rising sea waters and increasingly unpredictable bad weather patterns, homes are not safe places to live. What is ABM doing to help people in such places to find safe havens, or to make their homes strong against adverse weather conditions? You may wish to look at the ABM website (www.abmission.org) to find out. How can you help in this work yourself?