

Homily (notes) from Canon Philip Dyson  
**13th March 2022 - 2nd Sunday of Lent**

Readings (Year C): 1st: Genesis 15:5-12. 17-18. Psalm: 26. 2nd: Philippians 3:17-4:1. **Gospel:** Luke 9:28-36.

‘The modern world shows itself at one and the same time powerful and weak, capable of the noblest deeds or the foulest. Before it lies the path to freedom or to slavery, to progress or decline, to brotherhood or hatred. Moreover, humanity is becoming aware that the forces which we have unleashed are in our own hands and that we must either control them or be enslaved by them. Herein lies the modern dilemma.’ Words from Vatican II on the Church in the Modern World: *Gaudium et Spes*, the joy and the hope, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, published in December 1965.

Glory in recent weeks has no doubt been far from our minds. Yet today it is upon the glory of God that St Luke now fixes our thoughts. Glory is something inseparable from God: it surrounds him and makes his presence known. It is the special attribute of his divinity. When the glory has been seen and felt in the form of a cloud or a storm or a still small voice people have known that they were in the presence of God, and life and death and every other creature has been seen in a new light. It was this light and glory that was now to be revealed to the chosen Peter, John and James.

In the ministry of Jesus a turning point had been reached. Just before this, Peter, on behalf of the disciples had declared their faith in Jesus as “the Christ of God.” But their elation had been turned into horror by the terrible forecast of the passion and the sufferings Jesus would undergo, and they ultimately would share. As they had walked from Caesarea-Philippi Jesus had told them “The Son of Man is destined to suffer grievously, to be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes and to be put to death, and to be raised up on the third day.”

The suffering which he was to undergo was not final. Beyond the cross would lie the empty tomb, and beyond that the hill of the ascension, and in some remote future, a final vindication of Christ and a return in glory. But so great had been the shock of this announcement, so great the strain upon the faith and loyalty of his friends, that Jesus resolved to lift a corner of the veil which separates us from God and give them a glimpse of heaven. Pope St Leo the Great wrote of this: “By changing his appearance in this way he chiefly wished to prevent his disciples from feeling scandalized in their hearts by the cross.”

The purpose of the heavenly revelation is to show that the Passion is something decreed by God, and which Jesus freely accepted: to corroborate Peter’s profession of faith: and a way of strengthening the disciples for what lies ahead.

Interesting note that the Greek word Luke uses to refer to his ‘passing’ which he was to accomplish in Jerusalem is the word *exodus*.

Moses and Elijah representing not just the Law and the Prophets but the whole of the old order, as Jesus sets his face to the new exodus: the Pascal mystery. It is an exodus from the old diseased world to the new healthy world of the kingdom of God. It is an exodus for the dark night into the bright daylight.

All Jesus’ disciples are invited to accompany Jesus on this exodus journey, which leads to the glory they suddenly see shining from within him there on the mountain.

The light at the end of the journey is important, because we would not want to walk out into the dark night without the certainty that day will soon dawn. We all need the light at the end of the tunnel.

As far as Luke is concerned, whenever we encounter Jesus we are set on our way towards the light of a new human life. It may be a long journey, but we are assured that it will be a rewarding one.

Last words from Pope St Leo: ‘To help us do what he asks and endure our trials in patience, we must always have ringing in our ears these words of the Father: ‘This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased – listen to him.’