



Sunday Reflection Ordinary Time

in the Charges of St Margarets, Renfrew
& St Johns, Johnstone



For Sunday 27 February 2022

Sunday before Lent

On this final Sunday before Lent begins, we rejoice that God's glory is revealed in Jesus Christ. Through him, we can have a closer relationship with our Father, as the Spirit frees us to approach God face to face.

Reflection for this week's Gospel teaching

"Then from the cloud came a voice that said, 'This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!'" *Luke 9:35*

An Illustration to set the scene <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TNcJaf7qSyw>



4K LUCERNE

Overlooking the picturesque Swiss city of Lucerne and its beautiful lake stands the so-called Queen of the Mountains. At around one thousand eight hundred metres, she is by no means the highest mountain in Switzerland, but Mount Rigi is loved

by locals and tourists alike.

Writer Mark Twain hiked up and, once a hotel had been built, Queen Victoria (*herself not the tallest of queens*) spent a night at the summit, carried up in a sedan chair.

Today we can climb there by cog railway, and you'll find not only a hotel but a twentieth-century chapel. Sacred and secular also combine to provide a breathtaking 360-degree panorama of God's creation, snow-capped Alps and lakes, from the viewing platform of a huge TV antenna.



Before these were built, artist J. M. W. Turner painted many distant studies of the Rigi. Renowned for his use of light, Turner was fascinated by how the mountain changed colour under different weather conditions and at different times of day. Several paintings show clouds descending over the peak. If you're at the summit when that happens, you enter the cloud itself and the view is completely obscured.



Looking at the teaching of the Gospel

In our reading from Luke's Gospel we hear that Jesus went up a mountain to pray.



He often did, even though he'd once had a bad experience on a mountain.

During Lent, we'll remember his forty-day fast in the wilderness, after which Satan took him to the top of a mountain and offered him earthly power, which he resisted.

Jesus had already compared Peter with Satan for tempting him to abandon his mission and avoid the cross.

Here on this mountain, we again see Peter's endearing habit of getting things wrong, with the very best of intentions.

Build three dwellings for Jesus, Moses and Elijah?

What's wrong with that?

Chapels are still being built on mountains. Perhaps one mistake was to focus on buildings, shutting Jesus away under a roof, rather than enjoying his company on a mountain.

Or to concentrate on action rather than worship.

Another mistake Peter made was to view Jesus, Moses and Elijah as equals.

Even though he'd seen the face of Jesus change, even though his clothes became dazzling white, even though there was clearly something very special happening here, Peter didn't understand, didn't know what he was saying.

He was sleepy and terrified, and the cloud descended.

That is not only a physical possibility on a mountain, as on the Rigi, but a metaphor, illustrating that Peter still wasn't seeing clearly – either the supremacy of Jesus over his visitors, or his identity and purpose.

Wonderful things happen on mountains.

Talking with God on a mountain, Moses received the commandments that shaped the lives of the Jewish people.

On a mountain, Elijah heard the still, small voice of God, a whisper in the silence rather than the roar of wind, earthquake or fire.

Now, both of them were here with Jesus on this mountain.

And again they heard God's voice, this time from a cloud, paradoxically a familiar Old Testament sign of God's presence.

The voice identified Jesus as God's own Son, so that Peter and his companions could be in no doubt.

When the cloud lifted, Jesus alone remained.

How can we reflect on the application to our lives?

Great as Moses and Elijah undoubtedly were (as individuals and as representatives of the Old Testament Law and prophets), Jesus alone is God's Son.

Like those first disciples, ***we're urged to listen to him.***

Reading the Gospels, we too can hear what Jesus said, but we also have the benefit of his presence in our lives today.

Jesus went up the mountain to pray. Can we find somewhere away from the bustle of everyday life?

Sometimes life itself obscures our view of God, our understanding, our faith.

We are tired or frightened, or just too busy.

But if we make time to listen to Jesus, really listen, the cloud lifts and we can see him, know him.

In Jesus, we can gaze on God's glory without fear.

Through him, we can hear God's voice in our lives.

And through him, God hears us. J

Jesus is our means of communication, far more powerful than the TV antenna on Mount Rigi. That only serves central Switzerland.

Jesus serves the entire world.

"Then from the cloud came a voice that said, 'This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!'" *Luke 9:35*

Please share your response to this reflection to Rector@SECStJohnStMargaret.org.uk – did anything speak to you? Did you feel challenged, angered, consoled by something in the words? How did God's spirit move you as you read it? Have you shared the words with someone else? Is this a worthwhile thing to make available to folk whilst we cannot meet for corporate worship to share in word and sacrament? What are your thoughts?

www.SECStJohnStMargaret.org.uk