

Luke: Jesus sets his face for Jerusalem

Between Christmas and Easter we skip through the story of Jesus' ministry in order to reach Passiontide. It is not until after Pentecost that we enjoy a more leisurely stroll through Luke in all the long green weeks of the Trinity season.

Half way through February we enter Lent, and the gospel readings for this month all reflect this fact.

We begin with the story of the Stilling of the Storm (8:22-25). In Luke's account, after the miracle Jesus demands of his disciples, "Where is your faith?" and they then respond, "Who then is this?" Each Lent we also need to ask ourselves the same questions.

The next week we have the story of the Transfiguration (9:28-36). We are shown the answer to the disciples' question, as with Peter, James and John, we see Jesus in glory, and hear the voice from heaven saying, "This is my Son, my chosen. Listen to him." The voice from heaven reminds us of Jesus' baptism, but Luke also sends us forward towards the Passion, "they (Jesus, Moses and Elijah) were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem" (9:31). It is only Luke who records this detail, and it is also Luke alone who shows us Jesus setting off on the path that will lead to Calvary, "When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face towards Jerusalem" (9:51). And so with Jerusalem ahead of us, we enter Lent once more.

The first Sunday of Lent always gives us the story of Jesus' Temptations (4:1-13). Matthew and Luke include the same story, but notice how Luke stresses the presence of the Holy Spirit, "Jesus full of the Holy Spirit, returned from Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness." In Acts, Luke will give us the story of the Holy Spirit at work in his Church, we too are invited to fullness in the Holy Spirit.

Our final reading in February sees Jesus pressing on towards Jerusalem (13:31-35). We have another month to journey with him to Palm Sunday and Holy Week.

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