

FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Brothers and Sisters



Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John and led them up a high mountain on their own by themselves.”

A few years ago I was on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and one of the places we prayed at was Mount Tabor. This is the mountain referred to in today's Gospel, where Jesus went to pray with three of his disciples. When I visited we took a taxi from the base of the mountain to the summit, 1,886 ft above.

Jesus would have walked. Why would he have done that? Could he not just as easily have prayed at the foot of the mountain? When I travelled up by taxi, we passed some locals on the road who were on foot, and I could see that it was not an easy climb for them.

Lent is a time in which we are invited to do what is arduous, what is not easy. We usually look for the easy way out, the path of least resistance, that which suits us. Jesus did not do that. He led the disciples up the mountain, and there he would pray.

Twelve hundred years before Jesus lived, Mount Tabor was the site of an important battle between Barak, led by the prophetess Deborah, and the enemy army of Sisera. The enemy was vanquished.

Mount Tabor is the place of battle: between good and evil, light and darkness, chastity and concupiscence, humility and pride, patience and anger, hope and despair, fasting and gluttony, prayer and lethargy, alms-giving and avarice.

All of us are invited to enter into this battle in Lent. This means ascending Mount Tabor, doing that which we would rather not do.

Mount Tabor is the site of the Transfiguration, where Jesus announces his victory over the darkness of sin. In the Gospel of Mark the Transfiguration is seen as a glorious manifestation of the hidden Messiah. The disciples experience the 'heavenly quality of Jesus.' If there is a heavenly quality, there is also an earthly quality. The earthly quality, our every day affairs, attending to the children, the house, our work, can all too easily eclipse the true meaning, the real presence which we are invited to experience.

Lent helps us to remedy this.

On the day I visited Mount Tabor a wedding was taking place, you can see the newly-weds in the photo at top. We are invited to the wedding banquet of the Lamb. It will take place this Easter. May all of us accept the invitation, and prepare our ascent.

And don't take a taxi!

Fr. Sean