



DIOCESE OF ABERDEEN & ORKNEY

FROM ASHES TO FIRE: A JOURNEY FROM LENT TO PENTECOST

Monday 17th March 2025

Faith and Transformation

On Mondays, we delve deeper into the readings, picking up themes and seeking to explore more what they say, the words of Jesus, the Psalmists, Epistle writers and others. This week's theme is Faith and Transformation.

Some questions to think about as you read the Scriptures set for this week in the Revised Common Lectionary are suggested. You may wish to discuss these in a group, with a soul friend or record your thoughts in a journal.



Genesis 15:1–12, 17–18

In the passage from the Hebrew Bible we hear God's promise to Abram that his descendents will be more than the stars Abram can see in space. This is a promise, a covenant between God and Abram (later Abraham) and is recalled in the Benedictus, the Song of Zechariah (Luke 1:68–79), that is used in the SEC's Daily Morning Prayer.

Throughout Genesis God and Abram interact, God speaks; Abram listens. God promises; Abram believes. God commands; Abram obeys. However, we reach a point where Abram says 'I have a question'. This is a person of great faithfulness in God who wants to know how God's promises will be fulfilled when he has no children. This is someone who - as the passage reminds us - has travelled away from known territory at God's command.

Psalm 27

The poet William Cowper's wrote "He has no hope who never had a fear. Psalm 27 displays the tension between human fear and trusting in God and the hope of the assurance of God. The refrain of Psalm 27 is 'The Lord is my light and my salvation', suggesting that the Psalmist has experienced this. However, in the whole Psalm you can see that perhaps the Psalmist is not as easily seeing God's presence as before.

Psalm 27 reminds us that God does not work or act in accordance with our schedule, but that we have to have faith and trust whilst seeking to walk with God each day.

Philippians 3.17-4.1

This section of the letter to the church in Philippi talks about how we should live and where we should take our example from and seek to imitate - Christ Jesus and those who follow God well and diligently.

This portion of scripture speaks about how we are to live as community, how we are to live as individuals and what citizenship as individual Christians looks like - part of this world but not where our citizenship as Children of God lies.



Luke 13:31-35

This short part of the Gospel of Luke contains a warning for Jesus, King Herod - the fox, Jesus as Mother Hen and indicators of what will happen to Jesus at the end of Lent.

We do not know why the Pharisees warned Jesus about Herod - it could have been genuine concern for Jesus or moving Jesus away to somewhere where he would not be their problem. However, Jesus leaves but not permanently. There are hints of what will come in Holy Week - prophet acclaimed and rejected in Jerusalem, put to death and work completed after the third day. In verse 33 Jesus reveals that it is necessary for him to go but this is not to escape death but to travel to the place we know is appointed for his death.

We know Herod has history and we should take danger from him seriously – Herod beheaded John the Baptist (Jn 9.9)

Luke 13:31-35 (continued)

We see in this passage connections between Jesus, Jerusalem, Pilate and the murder of Galileans (previous verses). This is a reminder of the Kings of the Earth who will play a part in Jesus' trial. Luke, as Gospel writer, is stressing Jesus as prophet.

We know Herod has history and we should take danger from him seriously, as Herod beheaded John the Baptist (John 9.9) and a King Herod caused the Holy Family to flee as refugees. As a character Herod makes us ask the question Luke wants us to ask – Who is this Jesus we hear these things about. We have heard these from Herod in Luke 9. Herod asks who Jesus is and seeks to see him, to find out what is going on. Part of Lent is reflection, inviting that question in ourselves, encouraging our personal quests on our individual journeys of faith.

In contrast we hear the image of Jesus as Mother Hen. The image of members of the Trinity sheltering members of the faith community is not new. It is seen Psalm 91 "He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart." This imagery is described in five other psalms.



In Deuteronomy 32 when God is compared to an eagle that stirs up her nest, flutters over it's young, spreading out its wide majestic wings over the people of Israel. Or in Ruth 2 where Boaz acknowledges that Ruth in moving to a foreign land has been relying on God and seeking refuge under the wings of God.

Questions for Reflection & Discussion

- Where do you see signs of faith in Abram/Abraham and the Psalmist?
- What transformations due to faith are explored in Philippians?
- What are stories of faith and transformation of individuals in scriptures that are important in your faith journey?
- What does it mean to you to be gathered as a chick under the wings of Jesus as Mother Hen?