

⁴² He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter). *John 1:42*

(9:30) On the computer at home, I have a file containing short video clips that I have often found to be useful in introducing ideas at the start of a sermon. One of these is a short clip of a moth emerging from a chrysalis.

(11:00) Show video clip of a moth emerging from a chrysalis.

I always think that that is an amazing process. From the outside the chrysalis looks so lifeless – you would not suspect what lies inside waiting to burst out.

Then little by little the moth emerges – so different, so much more magnificent than the caterpillar that a short while before wrapped itself in silk.

The moth was always there, waiting to emerge into the light.

As we have continued in our reading of Mark's Gospel we have come to the account given by Mark of the calling of Simon. I want to set alongside that the account given by John in which Jesus says to Simon; 'You are Simon, you shall be called Peter.'

Names in that culture were very important – a change in name was very significant, represented a deep rooted change.

Saul the Pharisee, the persecutor of the early Church, becomes in the light of his meeting with the risen Jesus on the Damascus Road, Paul the evangelist, the great missionary of the Church.

Going back to Simon, the rest of his life was to be a process of turning the Simon he was into the Peter Jesus intended to be.

As you are well aware by now, I am very fond of Peter; I can very much identify with this Galilean fisherman. He so wanted to serve, he so wanted to get it right – so enthusiastic, so willing, so frail.

It was after all Peter who was the first to confess Jesus as the Christ but when Jesus started to talk of his vocation of suffering, Peter jumped in to say ‘That will never happen to you’ only to receive the rebuke, ‘Get behind me Satan, you think as men think not how God thinks.’ It was Peter, when the rest had fled, who followed Jesus to the High Priest’s house but the one who, when challenged by a servant girl, denied he ever knew Jesus. But then John presents us with that wonderful scene of reconciliation as the risen Jesus asks Peter three times, ‘Do you love me?’ receives that wonderful affirmation, ‘Feed my sheep’.

That day when Jesus met Simon, others would have seen a big fisherman, not the most important on the social scale of that day, probably a rough manner and accent. But Jesus looked beyond that – he saw the Peter inside, the Peter

he knew he could be, would be. As I say, the rest of Simon's life was a process of turning the Simon he was into the Peter God intended him to be.

God looks at each one of us and sees us as we are, in our strengths and our weaknesses, our virtues and our failings; sees the person we are, sees the person we can be. in the service of Baptism, as I make the sign of the cross on the head of the child the following prayer is said:

May almighty God deliver you from the powers of darkness,
restore in you the image of his glory,
and lead you in the light and obedience of Christ. **Amen.**

There is something special, something unique about each one of us – I am not talking about outward appearance, our IQ or our sporting abilities. The Bible says that we are all made in the image of God – what that is saying is that there is something of the divine in each one of us. We can hide it at times in our pride, our selfishness, our greed – but that something special, that something of the image of God is still there and God sees it.

In our Old Testament Lesson we have the story of Jonah preaching to the people of Nineveh. Nineveh was a pretty grim place – in truth Jonah probably liked the idea of God punishing them. The story tells us that Nineveh had a change of heart and they were not punished – God saw beyond the disobedience to something that was good. Jonah was confused, even angry with God.

As I remarked, as Simon came towards Jesus that day, other people would have seen a big fisherman, probably a rough manner and accent. But Jesus looked

beyond that – he saw the Peter inside, the Peter he knew he could be, would be. The rest of Simon’s life was a process of changing from the Simon he was into the Peter God intended him to be.

I began with that image of the moth emerging from the chrysalis, something beautiful emerging from the apparently lifeless cocoon.

There is something special to God about each person here. A big part of the Christian life is discovering that, building on that, becoming the person God wants us to be.