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Jesus, Peter, James, and John had this wonderful experience—this experience on the mountain—and now they come down, and they're back in the reality of it. The same problems as before.

And we kind of can relate to this. If you've ever been on a holiday—I don't take too many holidays, by the way. I don't like holidays. But when I go on a holiday and I come back, we might have had a relaxing time, and then I come back and all the troubles are back. They have mounted up, and I've got to work twice as hard to get through it.

And this is also a little bit for Jesus and the disciples. They had this incredible spiritual experience on the mount, this incredible peace which we cannot even explain in words. And here he's back down the mountain, and he's confronted by this man pleading with him to heal his son. And of course, the disciples get rebuked too, for their little faith. It's quite something.

It shows also the impatient side of Jesus. Jesus, who's fully human—of course, he would feel sometimes impatient with the people around him. “Can't you understand by now? Don't you get it?” And this is so human. And so, it's the same thing here.

But it's always about putting God first. In our first reading, from Deuteronomy, Moses explains the Shema: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength.” Put God first. Always.

It's easily said, but so hard to do. How can I focus my life completely on God? This takes transformation for each one of us. And of course, in our human weakness, we try—but we fall so easily, because we are surrounded by all these distractions in the world.

Today, it's a memorial of Edith Stein, officially known by her religious name, Teresa Benedicta of the Cross. Edith Stein, who was gassed at Dachau in 1942, also had to learn to put God first. A Jew by birth, she grew up in a Jewish family and totally lost her faith during World War I when she saw the atrocities and human suffering. She said, "How can there be a God? How is it possible?"

She had to learn that there is a God in all of this messiness, which we cannot explain. She was a philosopher, very incredibly intelligent. One night, she read the autobiography of Teresa of Avila, which led to a complete conversion—a complete conversion, how there is a God. A God who tries to bring good out of bad in such a messy world where there's so much struggle and so many disasters. And yet, God is at work.

She started to see that. She eventually became a Carmelite nun and moved from Germany to the Netherlands—actually just over the border from Germany, in the area where I grew up. A lot of German religious orders, with Kulturkampf and all of that, moved to the Netherlands away from Germany, but not too far away. That's where she ended up—in a town called Echt in Limburg.

She knew that her life would not be long. She started training, basically before the concentration camp. Her sister Rosa also joined her because it was too dangerous for them to be in Germany, since they were of Jewish birth.

In 1942, on July 26, the Dutch bishops read from every pulpit that they did not condone German oppression, especially the racism against the Jews. This was instigated by Titus Brandsma, who was also a Carmelite. He was an editor of a Catholic magazine and really the force behind it. This was not appreciated by the German enemy, and they had to pay the price for it. Titus Brandsma also ended up in Dachau and was gassed. Edith Stein and her sister Rosa ended up there too.

It is her journey to Dachau that really shows her faith—someone who put God first. She knew God was first, that God would bring good out of bad, no matter what.

When she was picked up and put in a transfer camp, you can imagine all these people in sorrow, depression, crying. She was like a light among the prisoners—helping others, laughing. One of the guards at the transfer camp even offered her an escape, and she said, “No. I’m going to be with my people. I know where I belong.” And she did. She was not afraid to take a stand.

This is the thing when we put God first. To put God first—God will give each of us what we need. God gave Edith Stein that courage and that joy as she was transported to Dachau and gassed.

But it is what we can learn from her life. So much good has come from her life. Of course, God works through that. She is an example to us even today, all these years later. If you put God first, good things will happen. We might not understand the story, but God will use it—and use it in ways we don’t understand, even after we die.

This is also for us, in our families: to be that sign of Christ in our families. Even if we don’t see the results today, it doesn’t matter. God will use all our work, and all our prayer, for the good of others.

Amen.