**Reflection Luke 9: 22 -40**

**I’ve called this Reflection “101 Things I’d Like to See Before I Die’ Hopefully it will all become clear to you as to why as I go on.**

**Some time ago, over a number of years, the BBC (British Broadcasting Commission), the equivalent of our ABC, ran a series called ‘101 Things Before I Die.’ There was a series on 101 places to visit, 101 things to do, 101 things to eat and 101 things to see. What they did was to ask people to write in telling them their favourite thing in each category, and then they put them into a top 100 list. They then did a countdown to reveal the number one that was the nations favourite.**

**Over the series they showed some great places in the world, like Florida in the USA, and the Great Barrier Reef in our own wonderful country, but the number one spectacular place to visit according to their survey was the Grand Canyon. My favourite place would be a toss-up between Hawaii and the Maldives. I have done one but not the other. Probably won’t get to do the second one now, but you never know, never say never!**

**Of the favourite things to do, there was meeting Mountain Gorillas in the wild, Bungee jumping, (No thank you, I’m scared of heights!), swimming with dolphins and seeing an active volcano. That last one is my number one, and Austin tried to make it happen for me when we visited Hawaii in 2014. He took me on a helicopter flight hoping that we’d see some volcanic action and some flowing lava, but the silly volcano erupted a few days before our flight and all we could see was steam and smoke, so it’s still on my bucket list, maybe I’ll be lucky next year when I’ll be visiting Hawaii again in October. The number one thing to do on the BBC’s list was to see a Tiger in the wild.**

**Favourite things to see included the Pyramids in Giza and the Eiffel Tower, with the number one being to see the Taj Mahal. The 101 things to eat before you die section was especially interesting as the producers were going to pick people to film, to explain what their favourite food was and why it was their favourite, and then if it turned out to be the number one favourite over all, they would pick one person to take to their favourite place where they would be filmed eating their favourite food. An all expenses paid trip to your favourite place, to eat your favourite food there, wow that would be worth winning wouldn’t it?**

**Many of us don’t get to see many, if any, of our favourite things we’d like to see or do before we die, but in our Gospel reading today we heard about two people who did see the number one thing to see on their list. Simeon actually got to see the thing he had been waiting for all of his life, and having seen it he said that he could now die in peace. Simeon got to see the Messiah – the absolute number one thing he wanted to see. He saw Jesus!**

**The Gospel writer Luke was a well-educated man, a doctor of medicine. Luke wrote his Gospel account of the life and works of Jesus to someone called Theophilus. This translates as ‘God lover’, and I like to think that he’s written his gospel for God lovers everywhere, not only for this specific person called Theophilus.**

**So in Luke’s Gospel we are told that the boy Jesus was taken by Mary and Joseph to the temple to be presented to God. It was a Jewish tradition that the first born son would be sacrificed to God along with a lamb and a dove.**

**Although the animals were killed, the child thankfully wasn’t, but was presented as a living sacrifice – with the promise that they would serve God all their life. We actually make that same promise when we say “We offer ourselves to you as a living sacrifice …. to live and work to your praise and glory. We proclaim this at each Eucharist service. Poor families, such as Mary and Joseph, who couldn’t afford a lamb, would offer two doves instead. This was quite acceptable.**

**The priest in the temple was Simeon. He was a righteous and devout man Luke tells us. He had been waiting all his life for one thing – God had told him that he would see the Messiah before he died. He knew instantly when he saw Jesus that he was the promised Messiah, and he praised God and declared that he didn’t need to see anything else – he had seen Jesus so could now die in peace.**

**So far in this passage we have met Mary, Joseph, Jesus and Simeon, but we also encounter a priestess named Anna. Anna was widowed after only being married for seven years, and since that time had lived the life similar to that of a nun, and she was now 84 years old. She lived in the temple, and she too saw Jesus that day, and from that moment on she told everyone about him.**

**So what do you think this passage is saying to us today. For me the message is loud and clear, it’s telling me that Jesus should be number one on my ‘to see’ list…but I need to pray for the to see Jesus, so that like Simeon I can say that now I can die in peace. On seeing Jesus Simeon was filled with the Holy Spirit, and because he had embraced Jesus he said to God that he could now die, because he had now found true peace. So we too can be filled with the Holy Spirit, we too can embrace Jesus and we too can find peace.**

**So we could follow the example of Simeon. We could also follow the example of Anna. Anna lived in the temple serving God. She was a good church worker and worshipper. There are a few people here whose partners may say, “You’re always at the church, you just about live there!” I’m not advocating that we move in here though! After Anna met with Jesus she went around telling everyone about him. Do we follow the example of Anna and after having met Jesus do we go around telling people about him?**

**Can we learn something from Simeon, an encounter with Jesus meant that the old un-peaceful life could die, but a new life of peace and joy could begin? Simeon actually lived to a ripe old age. Or do we emulate Anna, are you talking to everyone about Jesus?**

**So as I said at the start, the title of this Reflection is ‘101 things to see before I die’. Well number two to 101 are up to you, and you may or may not get the opportunity to see those things in your lifetime. But remember that Jesus longs for the number one spot to belong to him, and by praying for the grace, he can become the number one spot on our ‘to see’ list.**

**So let us pray”**

**Lord we pray that we may obtain the grace that only you can give, to see you as our number one spot on our ‘to see’ list, just as Simeon and Anna did so long ago. May you be the number one ‘to see’ on the list of each and every one of us. Amen.**