

Bananas. A much-loved, versatile foodstuff. Eaten with custard, in a sandwich or a cake, straight out of the zipper, demurely chopped into bite-sized pieces or consumed in a way that will never look elegant. Baked, in milk shakes, split with ice cream, in a thousand and one variations, the banana can be found filling bowls and bellies the length and breadth of Britain. Even its inedible skin has provided us with centuries of happiness thanks to its ability to pitch people straight onto their faces or their backsides when it is stepped on.

We buy so many bananas that they are the single biggest profit-making item for British supermarkets- remember that next time you see Dame Shirley Porter trying to look posh. Mile upon mile of grocery shelving is given over solely to this fruit. Yet entire generations of children who have listened to their elders who lived through the second world war know that time was when you couldn't acquire a banana for love nor money, when the fruit itself was a byword for exotic and sophisticated luxury. Seventy years ago, there were people alive who had never, ever seen one. When bananas returned to Britain's plates, and their skins to our streets, there was, apparently, scenes of wild rejoicing and happiness. Bananas had acquired an almost mythical status during their five year wartime absence and the yellow wrapped fruit was even used by the government of the day as a vivid symbol of a bright new future. Politicians never change.

It is an inevitability of human experience that the extraordinary rapidly and inexorably becomes ordinary; what was once cutting edge becomes bargain bin, the exotic becomes expected and the rare, commonplace. Who now could imagine that the humble humdrum everyday everyman yellow and white fruit could ever have been a source of such excitement and longing?

In 1945, the year the banana returned to Britain's shores, the sum total of people who had reached the summit of Mount Everest, the world's highest mountain, was zero. Eight years later, in 1953 it was two. Hillary and Norgay were the first, but far from the last. Five hundred and thirty four people climbed to the peak of Everest in 2010 alone and more got part way up before they gave up. The ascent of Everest, once a metaphor for determined endeavour, the indomitable human spirit and almost unthinkable achievement is little more than an expensive and exhausting holiday and an increasing environmental headache thanks to the amount of litter mountaineering tourists leave behind. If not quite as commonplace as a trip to Tesco's, our imaginations are slowly but surely dragging even the world's highest mountain down to earth.

Every year there are fewer frontiers, fewer challenges, fewer Eureka! moments to be found, but each interest group, each profession, each endeavour still has its Everest, the ultimate challenge, the big one.

For theologians, even the most amateur such as the Parish Priest, this is the Trinity. The Trinity Sunday sermon is that moment when, the world over, congregations can watch a preacher scrambling to scale the heights before tumbling unceremoniously down the rocky scree on the mountainside as they try to explain the unexplainable. Visual aids become ever more desperate and the sum total of understanding year in year out never increases. It's marginally less humiliating than a 'throw a sponge at the vicar' May Fair stall, but only just. I have seen many casualties and unlike the real mountain the Trinity can never be conquered.

So I'm not, this morning, going to try to explain why we have a God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but I do want to briefly think about mountains. Not the theological Everest of the Trinity, but the mountain in the Bible.

Moses you hopefully will recall ascends Mount Sinai, two tablets in hand and meets God. This is not a particularly unusual occurrence. From our books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy we can read that Moses was frequently popping up a mountain to meet God, finally coming back with a shining face and a fresh batch of laws, statutes and ordinances to delight and enthral the twelve tribes, who more often than not were up to some mischief in his absence *plus ca change*. Many years later Elijah encounters God's still small voice on the mountainside; Jesus goes up the mountain to pray, to preach, to be transfigured, to ascend to heaven. Mountains, it appears, are places where one can become closer to God.

Let us first clear out the way any notion that this may be some rather primitive understanding of geography, that God lives above the clouds and therefore the further up you go, the closer you are to heaven.

We do not need to ascend the heights to meet God: we can meet him in the burning bush or the raging sea, on level ground and on our own ground. When God comes to visit Abraham, that event depicted in the great Trinitarian ikons of the Orthodox tradition, he pretty much does something equivalent to popping round for tea.

We can experience God in the everyday- in the school run, the supermarket queue, the daily round and the constant slog: thousands and thousands of books have been written to show us just that. It is true, we can.

It is also true that you can get an idea of what you look like from looking in car windows, trying to see your reflection in a puddle, or from the responses of others- if they burst into uncontrollable laughter say when they see us then we might be having an extravagantly bad hair day or through slapdash dressing be displaying rather more underwear than we intended. We *can* use car windows, puddles and other people to know how we appear, but a mirror is always best.

We can meet God in the ordinary but for the vast majority of us we most readily recognise him in the extraordinary: we must ascend the mountain to free ourselves of everything everyday which demands our attention and distracts our praying. We can see God in the ordinary, but we see him clearest when the ordinary is transformed. The extra-ordinary is something beyond the ordinary: it doesn't have to be something spectacular, or exciting : a mountain after all is made up of just the same rocks and earth as the plain.

That's what the Church is there for. No need to raise your eyebrows.

There will be times when worship- especially Anglican worship- will leave you feeling utterly, mind-numbingly bored. Surely you didn't think it was just you? This is ok. Probably, sometimes this is how it should be. Seriously. Sometimes we can feel bored because we have stopped stuffing sweets into the mouth of our inner-brat, the one who is always screaming 'entertain me'.

It might be tempting to think that more people would come to experience God if church was more like their enjoyable, entertaining everyday experience- like a café say or a music concert or a film, but I'm not sure. Of course, there is no virtue in being po-faced or puritanical or piously miserable. But God is not a good DVD or a song that gets your foot tapping or that bloke in the pub who always makes you laugh (if the attraction is a combo of drink and risqué jokes he's probably a priest). God is not entertainment. You don't need to ascend the mountain to find that. We should certainly not equate 'feeling bored' with meeting God but we should not necessarily equate 'feeling good' with that experience either.

Experiencing God will be very much an 'other' experience, like no other experience we ever have or ever will have. God is always present, always everywhere but there is always so much else in the way. For most of us it is only by putting ourselves out of the ordinary, by taking ourselves away from the everyday, that we most clearly see what was there all along. From the people we find ourselves sitting with to the words we are saying to the actions we are performing, church is not in any sense for any of us ordinary. We are here, trying, in many different ways to strip away the everyday, like Zaccheus climbing the sycamore tree, to get a better glimpse of God. Every Sunday, you climb the mountain.

And so *is* the Christian journey; we make mountains out of the molehills of everyday life so that we can better see God.

Each step of that ascent will be something quite extraordinary, transforming that most everyday thing- a human life- into the very stuff of heaven.

We can never understand our one in three three in one God, we can only gaze in rapt awe at the mystery of Love that is our God. We must live and breathe God and the Gospel, every one of our heartbeats should be a pulsing prayer of praise; but can never think that what God transforms can any more be everyday.