

*Saturday 10th December 2022*

*Reading 1, Ecclesiasticus 48: 1-4, 9-11; Responsorial Psalm, Psalm 79:2-3, 15-16, 18-19; Gospel, Matthew 17:10-13*

'When I first read the daily readings and the Gospel reading I was drawn to find out more about Elijah.

I looked at the first story of Elijah who came from the desert having lived a rough, seminomadic life; he must have looked strange to the cultured people of Israel. I am not surprised the people were baffled by him and his announcement of the drought.

I spent time with the Bible stories about Elijah and enjoyed thinking about how important it was for the people who wrote the stories to show God's authority over the people and the land.

I then began to think about Elijah's journey, the people he met, and the conversations he had. I was drawn to the sentence at the beginning of the Gospel where the disciples were coming down the mountain and they were asking Jesus questions. How many deep conversations do we have on a journey?

I climbed Snowdon in June with my work colleagues and decided climbing was a great way to spend family time, so whilst on holiday in Poland, in Pieniny I decided it would be fun to climb with my sister, niece, and daughter. I picked a mountain similar in height to Snowdon, and we set off. It was such a struggle to keep two 14-year-old teenagers motivated that 20 minutes away from the top I chose not to reach it, but go around and down. We still walked for 5 hours, 15 kilometres, but as soon as we knew our journey was down the mountain the atmosphere changed and we had the most amazing time filled with fun and some deep and meaningful conversations. It is the journeys that we have that are life changing, for example: journey of education, employment, relationships, raising children and many more. The summit, like GCSE's, is a great moment that we would have never reached if it wasn't for all the people and events we encountered on our way.

I wonder how much Jesus and Elijah enjoyed the journeys and conversations they had along the way, and how much the disciples enjoyed spending time with Jesus?

What are you doing during your Advent journey?

**Reflection written by: Kasia Szczepanska, School Chaplain, St Aidan's Catholic Academy, Sunderland**