

## FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION

February 14, 2021

Leader: The parishes of the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa sit on the unceded territory of the Algonquin people.

All: **May we dwell together in harmony, unity and peace.**

### Opening Prayer

Leader: Holy God, mighty and immortal, you are beyond knowing, yet we see your face in the face of Jesus, whose compassion illuminates the world. Transform us into the likeness of the love of Christ, who renewed our humanity so that we might share in his divinity, the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God for ever and for ever. **Amen**

### Meditation for the Week

When Lent comes,  
you have to put away the tinsel;  
you have to take down your Christmas tree  
and stand out in the open...vulnerable.  
You either are or you aren't.  
You either believe or you don't.  
You either will or you won't.  
And, O Lord, how we love the stable and the star!  
When Lent comes, the angels voices  
begin their lamenting  
and we find ourselves in a courtyard  
where we must answer  
whether we know him or not.

*(Put Away The Tinsel from Kneeling in Jerusalem by Ann Weems)*

Celebrant Almighty God,  
**All to you all hearts are open,  
all desires known,  
and from you no secrets are hidden.  
Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may perfectly love you,  
and worthily magnify your holy name;  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Celebrant Glory to God in the highest,  
**All and peace to his people on earth.  
Lord God, heavenly king, almighty God and Father,  
We worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your Glory.  
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God,  
You take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us;**

**You are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.  
For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord,  
You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,  
In the glory of God the Father. Amen**

**The First Reading** is from the second book of Kings, Chapter 2, Verses 1 to 12

When the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. Elijah said to Elisha, “Stay here; the LORD has sent me to Bethel.”

But Elisha said, “As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you.” So they went down to Bethel.

The company of the prophets at Bethel came out to Elisha and asked, “Do you know that the LORD is going to take your master from you today?”

“Yes, I know,” Elisha replied, “so be quiet.”

Then Elijah said to him, “Stay here, Elisha; the LORD has sent me to Jericho.”

And he replied, “As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you.” So they went to Jericho.

The company of the prophets at Jericho went up to Elisha and asked him, “Do you know that the LORD is going to take your master from you today?”

“Yes, I know,” he replied, “so be quiet.”

Then Elijah said to him, “Stay here; the LORD has sent me to the Jordan.”

And he replied, “As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you.” So the two of them walked on.

Fifty men from the company of the prophets went and stood at a distance, facing the place where Elijah and Elisha had stopped at the Jordan. Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up and struck the water with it. The water divided to the right and to the left, and the two of them crossed over on dry ground.

When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, “Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?”

“Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit,” Elisha replied.

“You have asked a difficult thing,” Elijah said, “yet if you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours—otherwise, it will not.”

As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind.

Elisha saw this and cried out, “My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!”

And Elisha saw him no more. Then he took hold of his garment and tore it in two.

This is the word of the Lord  
**Thanks be to God**

**Psalm 50 (verses 1-6)**

The Lord, the God of gods, has spoken;  
he has called the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.

**Out of Zion, perfect in its beauty,  
God reveals himself in glory.**

Our God will come and will not keep silence;  
before him there is a consuming flame,  
and round about him a raging storm.

**He calls the heavens and the earth from above  
to witness the judgement of his people.**

“Gather before me my loyal followers,  
those who have made a covenant with me  
and sealed it with sacrifice.”

**Let the heavens declare the rightness of his cause;  
for God himself is judge.**

**The Second Reading** is from **the Second letter of Paul to the Corinthians,**  
Chapter 4, Verses 3 to 6

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing.

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.

For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**The Gospel**

Reader: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Reader: The Holy Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ according to the Blessed St. Mark.

People: **Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

**St. Mark Chapter 9, Verses 2 to 9**

After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus.

Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” (He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.)

Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: “This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!”

Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.

As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

The Gospel of Christ.

People: **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

### **The Homily**

There are two Sundays in the Church year that fill me with trepidation and anxiety in terms of preaching – one is Trinity Sunday and the other is the Feast of the Transfiguration which we celebrate today. The reason I am so nervous around them is a simple question, “What does this mean and what does it say to me and us today?” I struggle with these two Sundays year after year and you would think I would finally learn to answer the question posed in the movie, “What’s it all about, Alfie?” Each year, I wait to hear the famous words of ‘Enry ‘Iggins in *Pygmalia* (also known as *My Fair Lady*) addressed to my congregation about me, “By jove, I think he’s got it!” Perhaps this is the year....perhaps not.

Matthew, Mark and Luke all have the story of Jesus’ encounter with Moses and Elijah on Mount Tabor and they are in basic agreement about the facts of the matter – Jesus goes up this mountain with Peter, James and John who think Jesus wants to decompress after a heavy time of teaching and healing and wants company to debrief. They also want some alone time with him so he could explain at greater depth what he had just said about “taking up your cross” and following him.

When they reach the summit, they are exhausted because the climb is long and the path is extremely twisty (as it still is today). They get there around the noon hour and the sun is brilliantly high above them; there is probably a slight breeze making the grasses dance before them. Then, it happens -- Jesus’ clothes turn a dazzling white and his face “shone like the sun”. Thick clouds roll in and suddenly the three disciples are lost in a fog in more ways than one. Through the cloud, they perceive that there are two other persons who have joined them. They believe that Elijah, the prophet and Moses, the liberator are now in conversation with Jesus but they cannot hear or make sense of what they’re talking about.

Peter responds to what is happening by telling Jesus that he will build three booths right then and there. Simon is remembering that what he is seeing is part of the “end times” narrative taught the Jewish people: that before the apocalypse, Elijah will return and begin the in-gathering of the faithful to wait out the cosmic battle between the forces of good and those of evil. This is a central theme of the Jewish festival of Sukkoth which began as a harvest celebration and through time became a remembrance of the experience of the Israelites when Moses was given the Law on Mount Sinai during the forty years of exile we call the Exodus. With Moses and Elijah present, Peter wants to erect three shelters – one each for Jesus, Elijah and Moses. But, before he can begin to find wood and branches to make such

“houses”, he, James and John hear a Voice which says, “This is my Son, my Beloved One...listen to him”

These are the same words Jesus heard at the moment of his baptism: the difference between the utterance then and now is that the first declaration was made to Jesus alone – it seemed to be an internal message that only Jesus heard. But here on Tabor, it is a public testament from God as to the true nature and identity of this Jeshua bar Joseph from Nazara. This is a moment of transformation, of transfiguration in the relationship between Jesus and his disciples. The true personhood and nature of Jesus is now public! But Jesus tells his friends that they are to keep his identification as Messiah a secret until the time is right.

That is the story in as much of a nutshell as I am capable of creating. Now, the question looms, “What does this mean?” To begin to try to answer that, we need to have an understanding of what the word “transfiguration” means. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, it means “to transform” or “to change into something more beautiful”. Well, that doesn’t help a lot but there is a path to understanding this if we know what Greek word Mark used – it was *metamorpho*, from which we get the term *metamorphosis*. Remember your high school biology class when the word was used to describe the process wherein a larva turns into a pupa then a chrysalis and finally a butterfly? Now THAT’S metamorphosis! A rather ugly grub is changed, transformed into a thing of utter beauty. Just physically, it is a new creation and in a similar way the “brilliance-ing” of Jesus’ robes from dirty, dusty, drab brown to a shining and dazzling white marks the transformation of Jesus from being a simple shepherd to being the long-awaited Messiah of God. This is affirmed and attested to by God himself with his solemn declaration, “This is my Son, my Beloved One” and the admonition that the disciples were to pay attention to what he said and did for they were the words and actions of God himself!

But, maybe there is another transfiguration that occurs on Tabor – what about the disciples? Think of the journey they have just taken in a short period of time. When they began the ascent, they saw Jesus as a brilliant teacher who had been blessed with healing powers and a magnificent vision of what the world would be like IF people lived according to the will of the Creating One and acted with love towards the whole of creation. Just before this Tabor moment, the disciples and the hangers-on had been asked by Jesus, “Who do you say I am?” and they had responded, “Some say you are Elijah or one of the prophets; others say you are John the Baptizer risen from the dead”. But Jesus digs in and asks again, “But who do you say I am?” and is met with ... utter silence. The disciples look at the ground, look at one another, fidget a bit – no one wants to bite the bullet and say the wrong thing. In the heart of this uncertain moment, Peter blurts out, “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God”. All eyes are on him and the fellowship waits for the hammer to fall – that Jesus will scold Peter or worse, laugh at him. But, Jesus looks at his old friend and says, “Well done, Petros; you did not get that from flesh and blood, but from my Father”.

So, for me the transfiguration begins just outside the gates of Caesarea Philippi and moves slowly forward as Jesus and his people begin to move through the Galilee. As they wander, Jesus tells them of his future – of persecution, arrest and murder most foul. On hearing this, Peter takes Jesus aside and takes him to task for scaring the community with such talk and dark thoughts. Jesus sees that Peter’s confession was a transitory and momentary thing; that Peter has not been transformed at all. Hence, the journey up Mount Tabor where Peter, James and John undergo a metamorphosis of their own: no longer

simply followers of Jesus and believers because of his healings (like Thomas who refused to acknowledge Jesus without seeing the scars), now they were true believers because they had experienced a divine encounter. Even though Peter was to continue to fall into dark places culminating in his refusal of Jesus three times before the mob, he is a true believer – it's too bad his humanity kept getting in the way. BUT, remember how Jesus three times forgave Peter on the beach after the Resurrection -- there is hope for all of us yet!

This day reminds me that there is always the possibility that I can have (or have had) moments of divinity without all the bells and whistles -- watching children being curious, inquisitive about their world and their place in it and sometimes just zanniness for no reason; in sitting on the boathouse roof at the cottage, watching the gloaming time between sunset and sundown when all nature goes silent and there is a wondrous luminosity; in being in community and simply being one's self and there is no judging, no shaming but simply acceptance and love; in succeeding at something, at failing too; at the sound of beautiful music or the sight of incredible art; of smells that remind me of happier times and sadder times.... all these and thousands of other experiences of transfiguration and transformation which invite me to see, hear and feel in new and exciting ways, helping me to turn from a larva into one of God's butterflies.

And for this I thank you, Lord.

**AMEN**

### **The Apostles' Creed**

Celebrant: Let us confess the faith of our baptism, as we say,

**All: I believe in God,**

**the Father almighty,**

**creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.**

**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.**

**He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.**

**He descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again.**

**He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again  
to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,**

**the holy catholic Church,**

**the communion of saints,**

**the forgiveness of sins,**

**the resurrection of the body,**

**and the life everlasting. Amen.**

### **The Prayers of the People**

By your incarnation and your birth in poverty, by your baptism, your fasting, and your trials in the desert, O Lord, hear our prayer;

**Lord, have mercy.**

By your agony in the garden, by your cross and passion, by your death and burial, by your resurrection and ascension, and by the gift of your Holy Spirit, O Lord, hear our prayer;

**Lord, have mercy.**

In times of trouble and in times of well-being, at the hour we die and on the day of your glory, O Lord, hear our prayer;

**Lord, have mercy.**

Deliver us from war and violence, from hardness of heart and from contempt of your love and your promises; O Lord, hear our prayer;

**Lord, have mercy.**

Enlighten our lives with your word, that in it we may find our way and our hope; O Lord, hear our prayer;

**Lord, have mercy.**

Assist your people in every land, govern them in peace and justice, defend them from the enemies of life; O Lord, hear our prayer;

**Lord, have mercy.**

We ask you to watch over all our parish family, remembering especially Zachariah, Marjorie, Cheryl, Jeanette, Roy, Emerson, and those known to You alone. May we, by example, draw others towards the glorious Light of the World.

In the Worldwide Anglican Cycle of Prayer, we pray for the Anglican Church of Canada.

In our Diocesan Cycle of Prayer, we pray for the Director of Community Ministries, The Reverend Canon Dr. Peter John Hobbs, and members of the Community Ministries Committee; for Resurrection Lutheran Church and their pastor, Mei Sum Lai; and for all called to vocations in the priesthood and religious life.

### **Confession and Absolution**

Celebrant: Dear friends in Christ, God is steadfast in love and infinite in mercy; he welcomes sinners and invites them to his table.

Let us confess our sins, confident in God's forgiveness.

Celebrant: Most merciful God,

**we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us, that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your name. Amen.**

Celebrant: Almighty God have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and keep you in eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord

**Amen**

### **The Peace**

Leader: The peace of our Lord be always with you.

All: **And also with you.**

### **Additional Prayers**

**All: Holy God, you have revealed the glory of your love in Jesus Christ, and have given us a share of your Spirit. May we who listen to Christ follow faithfully, and in the dark places where you send us, reveal the light of your gospel. Amen**

Leader: God of hope and love, as our world seems more and more chaotic in this time of pandemic, help us to open our hearts and minds to *your peace*. Sometimes, Lord Jesus, when we are alone, bombarded by news and statistics, we may feel lonely, scared, apprehensive and afraid that nothing will ever be the same again. In those moments, be with us so that we may feel your love surrounding us and help us to remember that you will never leave us. Give us the strength to reach out to other people to share our fears and feelings and to listen to theirs so that together we may find calm in knowing that we are your people and that you gift us with all that we need, moment by moment, hour by hour, day by day. In all things and no matter how we feel, give us the wisdom and knowledge to always give thanks to you. May that gift of gratitude help us to return to you and overcome the fear that threatens us. Bless us God, who is blessed Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

**Amen**

*(from The Anglican Fellowship of Prayer 2020)*

**All: Lord, enable our parish of Holy Trinity to do your will; make it vulnerable so that it may speak with calm humility; make it outward looking so that it may care deeply; make it a community of bridge builders and peacemakers. In the midst of the turbulence, let our church make space for the hearing of your still small voice. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen**

Leader: Almighty and Everliving God, source of all wisdom and understanding, be present with those who take counsel in our parish Vestry next week for the renewal and mission of our parish family. Teach us in all things to seek first your honour and glory; guide us to perceive what is right and grant us both the courage to pursue it and the grace to accomplish it. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Redeemer, Friend and Brother. Amen

Leader: Christ be with us, Christ within us, Christ behind us, Christ before us, Christ beside us, Christ to win us, Christ to comfort and restore us. Christ beneath us, Christ above us, Christ in quiet, Christ in danger, Christ in the hearts of all who love us, Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

*(from I Bind Unto Myself Today Hymn 436 Common Praise)*

### **Dismissal and Blessing**

Leader: *Go now into the world that God the Creator has made for us. Go now and tell the story of the God of gods and Light of lights, who for our sake sent Jesus Christ, that we might be reconciled to the One True God. Go, believing in God, Father Son and Holy Spirit. Alleluia. Amen.*

*(Are We Clapping for the Wrong God? From Reaching for Rainbows by Ann Weems)*



## **Announcements**

**Ash Wednesday:** Our Lenten season begins on Ash Wednesday, February 17. Because of COVID, we are not able to gather as community to “keep a holy Lent” so I am proposing the following: on Tuesday February 16<sup>th</sup>, I will place small bags of blessed ashes at the front door of Holy Trinity and I invite any who wish ashes to come and take a bag. That evening I will zoom a shortened service for Ash Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. during which you can sign yourself with the sign of the cross in ashes – there is no “rule” that says this act of honouring the beginning of Lent has to be done by an ordained person. I will have the ashes at the church by 1:00 p.m. on Shrove Tuesday (February 16<sup>th</sup>)

**Annual Vestry:** Our Parish Zoom Vestry will be held on February 21 at 11:30 a.m.

## **Invitation To Bible Study For Lent**

In the BAS and BCP, there is a statement which reads thusly, “I invite you in the name of the Lord to observe a holy Lent, by self-examination, penitence, prayer, fasting and almsgiving, and by reading and meditating on the word of God...”

Traditionally, parishes offer some form of study during the Lenten season to help us focus our thoughts and life on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. I would like to keep that tradition alive in the parish this Lenten season.

Beginning February 24<sup>th</sup> (Wednesday), I am offering a Zoom-time study on THE LORD’S PRAYER. This is the pivotal prayer of the Christian community, toasty warm and familiar to us all; BUT, did you know it had (and still has) a profoundly revolutionary heart, as taught by Jesus?

Only three things are needed: a Bible, a notebook (if you want to keep a record) and an open mind and imagination.

Please consider joining me on Wednesday afternoons (Feb 24; March 3, 10, 17 & 24) beginning at 1:30 p.m. until 3:00 p.m. (no later, I promise!)

If you are interested, please register before February 18 with me at [flemingmichael@rogers.com](mailto:flemingmichael@rogers.com).

Blessings to you all. Fr. Michael

The **World Day of Prayer** committee recognizes that we cannot gather for our usual World Day of Prayer service so they are promoting their one-hour World Day of Prayer 2021 service video.

The WDP 2021 program was written by women in Vanuatu with the theme, “Build on a Firm Foundation”, based on Matthew 7:24-27. The country of Vanuatu is a group of over eighty islands located in the South Pacific, east of Australia.

The World Day of Prayer 2021 service video, prepared by the Women’s Inter-Church Council of Canada, can be accessed after February 15 by going to [wicc.org](http://wicc.org) and clicking on the “One Hour Service Video” button. If anyone would like to make a donation they may do so by donating online at [wicc.org](http://wicc.org) or mailing a cheque to:

WICC, 47 Queen's Park Cres E., Toronto, ON, M5S 2C3