

Transfiguration of Our Lord / Last Sunday after Epiphany

Sunday, March 2, 2025

Introduction to the day

Witnesses to the glory of God in the face of Jesus reflect that glory in the world. It was true for Moses. It was doubtless true for Peter, James, and John. We pray that it will be true of all of us who see God's glory in the word and in the supper and who are being "transformed into the same image" by God's Spirit.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Holy God, mighty and immortal, you are beyond our knowing, yet we see your glory in the face of Jesus Christ. Transform us into the likeness of your Son, who renewed our humanity so that we may share in his divinity, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

FIRST READING: Exodus 34:29-35

A reading from Exodus.

Moses' face shone with the reflected glory of God after he received the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai. The sight caused the Israelites to be afraid, so Moses wore a veil to mask the radiance of God's glory, taking it off when he spoke directly with God.

PSALM: Psalm 99

Proclaim the greatness of the LORD; worship upon God's holy hill. (Ps. 99:9)

SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 3:12—4:2

A reading from 2 Corinthians.

In his debates with the Corinthians, Paul contrasts the glory of Moses with the glory of Christ. The Israelites could not see Moses' face because of the veil. But in Christ we see the unveiled glory of God and are transformed into Christ's likeness.

GOSPEL: Luke 9:28-36 [37-43a]

The conversation about Jesus' suffering and death is enclosed in a dazzling foreshadowing of the resurrection. God affirms Jesus' identity, the disciples are stunned speechless, and Jesus resumes his mission with a demonstration of his power over evil.

GOSPEL MESSAGE - TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD - Chaos and Mystery

Ghost-like prophets from generations past, a face suddenly transformed, dazzling clothes, frightening fog, and a mysterious voice: today's gospel text might sound like the beginning of a strange science fiction novel. Indeed, this passage has mystified theologians, biblical scholars, preachers, and followers of Jesus for centuries. What do we make of such an unusual tale?

Perhaps the chaos and mystery are part of the point: after all, who can fully describe an encounter with the Divine? How can we even begin to understand the glory of God? If this text leaves us speechless, we are in good company with God-seekers across the ages. Some experiences simply defy tidy explanations, and the transfiguration is one of them.

This story offers us glimpses of some of the most profound mysteries of our faith. Jesus is the fulfillment of the law and the prophets, the one sent and affirmed by God. Jesus is the glory of God revealed among us. In him, we find our past, present, and future all wrapped up into one. Even the most devout disciples might find

themselves confounded by these revelations. Perhaps we are given these truths only in glimpses to spark our curiosity and wonder, and to let the gift of faith reveal their meaning.

This story also assures us that although Jesus shines with God's glory on the mountaintop, he is sent back into the day-to-day world to carry on the work of life-saving mercy, healing, and justice. Like Peter, James, and John, we might encounter God on the mountaintops of life and be tempted to set up camp there. But God is the one who leaves the mountain for the often-unglamorous work of serving others. We trust that here, too, God is with us—not just on the mountaintops but in the valleys and everywhere in between, transforming us for the work of discipleship here and now in the ordinariness of life.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

With the Spirit of Christ shining upon us, let us boldly pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

Transfiguring God, through the glory of your presence, you transform us. Move the church from complacency to boldness in sharing the good news with others. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for your creation. As seasons change, give patience and skill to all who tend to animals giving birth. Grant nourishing weather for the growing of crops. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all in leadership, especially for those who lead provinces, counties, and town councils. Give them wisdom to protect local resources so that all will flourish both now and in the years to come. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Bring your healing grace to those who feel distant from you. Speak comfort to those who need your words of mercy. We pray for those close to our communities and in our hearts especially: Linda Boland, Sandra Gagnon, Shirley Glickman, Donna L. Hoffman, Claude Jeannotte, Cassie Jessup, Bill Lorbetkie, Glenda Panke, Barry Rogers, Marilyn Schneider, Danny Schultz, Doug Sell, Debbie Thom, Keith Weckwerth, Elaine Yourth, Stephanie Yourth, and those in long term care facilities and senior residences. In this moment of silence, we name out loud or from the silence of our hearts, those who need your healing touch. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

God of our past, present, and future, lead us into new beginnings, trusting in the promise of new life in Christ. Accompany congregations needing to close, and give courage to congregations members as they grieve their loss. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Renewing God, the saints who have gone before us witnessed to the ways you transform your church and people. Today we remember our brother Harold Yourth. We give thanks for their example and pray we carry it forward. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

We entrust our prayers to you, O God, in the sure and certain hope that your promise is revealed among the people. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✚ give you peace.

Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Share the good news.

Thanks be to God.

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