

TRANSFIGURATION SUNDAY MARCH 2, 2025

Prayer of the Day:

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. Illumine the world with your image—through Jesus Christ our Lord who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God now and forever. Amen.

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

28 Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. 29 And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. 30 Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. 31 They appeared in glory and were speaking about his exodus, which he was about to fulfill in Jerusalem. 32 Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep, but as they awoke they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. 33 Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good for us to be here; let us set up three tents: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah,” not realizing what he was saying. 34 While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. 35 Then from the cloud came a voice that said, “This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!” 36 When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen. [

37 On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met him. 38 Just then a man from the crowd shouted, “Teacher, I beg you to look at my son; he is my only child. 39 Suddenly a spirit seizes him, and all at once he shrieks. It convulses him until he foams at the mouth; it mauls him and will scarcely leave him. 40 I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not.” 41 Jesus answered, “You faithless and perverse generation, how much longer must I be with you and put up with you? Bring your son here.” 42 While he was being brought forward, the demon dashed him to the ground in convulsions. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. 43a And all were astounded at the greatness of God.]

SERMON-

What do you suppose finally led Peter, James and John to break their silence about about seeing Jesus’ transfigured as he prayed on the mountain?

It fits that we would need assurance that what happens to Jesus in Jerusalem isn’t only yet another example of the empire crushing dissenters—

Let’s look at just one unique feature Luke includes in his telling of the event. Luke reports what Jesus, Moses and Elijah talk about Jesus pending arrest and execution. Luke uses the word EXODUS. Jesus is revealed as liberator.

Moses and Elijah know a thing or two about liberation and freedom from oppression. God's liberating ways are like a vibrant thread woven through a tapestry of scripture. Israel's experience is defined by the Exodus. The early stories lead up to Exodus and the Law and prophets operate in light of its reality.

Is the cloud that overshadows the disciples meant to remind us of the cloud that leads the Hebrew refugees to a promised land? Is the voice from above meant to remind us of the one that speaks to Moses, giving Ten Words that would teach a people to live liberated lives?

A divine word that Jesus is the beloved reprises words spoken from above at his baptism and they foreshadow the confessional words from the executioner—words accompanied, not incidentally by darkness, seismic tremors, and the shredding the Temple curtain in half. This liberator is revealed as God's own beloved...the one who preached in synagogue saying he would be fulfillment the prophet's vision of liberation for the captive, good news for the poor and the year of the Lord's favour.

What happens after the transfiguration is also most revealing. In this season of epiphany or as some call it manifestation we see Jesus at work. The disciples fail to do what they were once able to do; so Jesus liberates a child oppressed by a spirit that slams the child to the ground in seizures and convulsions. Soon thereafter the disciples would be ensnared with petty squabbles over which one of them was greatest. Jesus overrides the trap telling his followers that welcoming a child in his name is a mark of a true follower. It is still a very long way to Jerusalem with pitfalls and setbacks at every turn. Yet Jesus is present even in the setbacks...undeterred from who he is and what he is destined to do—to be the agent of liberation for all and of all.

Epiphany gives way to Lent, and we continue on, straining to listen for Christ's call for us to follow and squinting for glimpses of God's liberating ways in our lives and in the world.