

SJM 8.30am and 10.30am

**6th Aug 2017
The Transfiguration**

Luke 9 v28-36

2Peter 1 v16-19

Introduction and invitation:

Thinking about the transfiguration of Jesus today. It is an incredible and almost indescribable event and I think we probably have nothing in our lives that can quite compare. We have seen some artists' interpretations of the transfiguration – different ages, different styles, and different genres. During the service, if you enjoy expressing yourself through art or through words, I invite you to produce your own interpretation of the transfiguration. It may be a picture, it may be a poem, it may be a piece of prose. There are some outline drawings for those who need guidance or ideas and we'll bring them up to the altar when we bring up our gifts for communion.

Reflection:

The Transfiguration of Jesus is sometimes called a mountain-top experience. I bet we've all had one of those at some time or another. Something so wonderful – a proposal, a wedding, a birth... You think that at that moment you're actually in heaven and you want to stay there. We say 'we're on cloud 9,' don't we?

Mountains figure a lot in God's dealing with his people: Ararat (ark), Moriah (Abraham's sacrifice), Sinai (10 Commandments), Carmel (Elijah and the false prophets), Horeb (Elijah fled for safety), Zion (Jerusalem), Olives (this experience and others in the life of Jesus). But what happened after each mountain experience? They came down: we also must come down.

Listen to this poem by Malcolm Guite:

Transfiguration

For that one moment, 'in and out of time',
On that one mountain where all moments meet,
The daily veil that covers the sublime
In darkling glass fell dazzled at his feet.
There were no angels full of eyes and wings
Just living glory full of truth and grace.
The Love that dances at the heart of things
Shone out upon us from a human face
And to that light the light in us leaped up,
We felt it quicken somewhere deep within,
A sudden blaze of long-extinguished hope
Trembled and tingled through the tender skin.
Nor can this this blackened sky, this darkened scar
Eclipse that glimpse *of how things really are*.

Malcolm Guite

<https://malcolmguite.wordpress.com/2012/08/04/a-sonnet-for-the-feast-of-the-transfiguration/>

'*of how things really are*' – mountain-top experiences give us glimpses of the eternal; experiences of the realisation of the hope that is in us where the realities, the truths and the hardships of life are left behind. But we mustn't dwell there – these are just a 'foretaste of the glory divine' – we must witness and minister where we are now in real life. Our message of hope is needed in this world and the excitement, wonder and glory of a mountain-top experience must be shared.

The Transfiguration of Jesus by Pope Francis

Transfigure me, Lord, transfigure me,
but not only me,
Purify also all the children of your Father
who pray to you with me or who have prayed to you
or who perhaps did not even have a mother
who helped them babble an Our Father.

Transfigure us, Lord, transfigure us.
If perhaps they know you not or have their doubts
or even blaspheme you, wipe their face clean
as Veronica wiped yours;
draw back the thick cataracts of their eyes
so that they see you, Lord, as I see you.

Transfigure them, Lord, transfigure them.

<https://predmore.blogspot.co.uk/2016/08/prayer-transfiguration-of-jesus-by-pope.html>

So revel in your mountain-top experience but don't stay there.
Relax in those moments and be recharged and renewed to serve
faithfully without fading in the places where Jesus isn't yet known
as Lord. 'Be attentive to this (prophetic message) as to a lamp
shining in a dark place' and may your prayer also be, 'Transfigure
them, Lord, transfigure them.'