

## Transfiguration Sunday 2023

I noticed the other day how cluttered my house had become. It happens over time and without intent. However it is not just our houses that tend to get cluttered – there's our garage, our paperwork and possibly the back seat of your car.

All this may prove to be maddening, but none of that is life threatening. It is not so with a cluttered heart. You know, that place where you store your concerns and grudges, your confusions and misconceptions, your old mistakes and a long list of what you're owed.

I think that a great deal of our faith journey, that process of growing in trust and acceptance of the unknowable mystery of God, is a process of uncluttering our hearts, or in the language of today's Gospel reading, asking God that we might be transfigured.

The story tells us Jesus went up a mountain and was not only transfigured before the eyes of Peter, James and John, but is seen in the presence of long dead Moses and Elijah. God speaks. The disciples are dumbfounded. Then everyone goes back to their regular life.

Or did they? Up until this moment Jesus had been healing and casting out demons and forgiving and feeding and talking about the advent of God's kingdom. Then he travels up this mountain, and is transfigured.

Now just in case you wonder what exactly it means to be transfigured, I want you to know I looked it up. There is no other word for it – it is to appear other worldly – yourself but not yourself. Jesus went up that mountain: a single, observant, Jewish male from a small village in an agrarian society with a lower income living under Roman rule – and every single part of him was transfigured. He was what he had always been but now the disciples saw him in a different light – a divine light. In the midst of who he was, he was revealed as something much, much more.

Which gave his message a deeper meaning and greater importance to his followers. They had observed his heart for the oppressed, poor, outcast, wounded. How he gave space and worth to folk who were usually unseen, unwanted, and unheard.

They had watched as he asked the difficult questions of everyone – his own people, his enemies, and the powers that be, questioning the way they made money, the people they rejected, their own self-pride. They had watched him model a new way of being: binding up each others' wounds, forgiving because forgiveness is life.

And now, all of that is transfigured: taken up into this high place – this sacred spot – where God is so palpable that Moses and Elijah – the foundations of all that Israel knew about God – are present as well and the great sweep of God's actions throughout history is tied together – and Jesus is clearly a part of God's vision for a beloved creation.

God's vision involves more than a tweaking of old systems, taking off a few rough edges of our habits and culture and tradition – but a transfiguration – a de-cluttering of your heart – so you might be transfigured as well.

Today we are invited once again to a transfigured life: transformed from our old ways and committed to the path of righteousness that Jesus teaches us. I think you've tasted a transfiguration moment in your faith journey: an experience of the righteousness of God, the power of love, obstacles and old habits falling away and perfect clarity about the way forward.

We stand in awe – and it becomes clear that some of the things we have held in our hearts – grudges and prejudices and old wounds and pride stand in the way of God's restoration of life in this world – and must be cast aside. We see our lives in a new light as Jesus calls us to embrace a life which is life giving to all. The clutter in our hearts has to be thinned because it is slowing down the transformation of our lives.

In those moments when we stand in the presence of the Divine, let's cast aside those words on our lips or secreted in our hearts that bar the way for others. We are so convinced that we are right, that we know what holiness looks like, that we know who Jesus would have welcomed to the table, to share the feast. I expect this is true for you; I know it is true for me.

Today we stand on the mountaintop and consider the power of the scene before our eyes, how Jesus' story will unfold and the hard work lying ahead. Take a moment to consider the clutter in your heart – lay it out right before your own eyes; call it by name.

LET'S DO THAT RIGHT NOW. CLOSE YOUR EYES, BLOCK OUT DISTRACTIONS AND FOCUS INWARDLY. FOR WHOM ARE YOU CONCERNED? Pray for their well-being WHAT IS WEIGHING YOU DOWN? Pray for clarity and discernment, then set it aside for these moments. WHO DO YOU FIND HARD TO ACCEPT? Pray that they know blessings and joy. WHAT ARE YOU STORING THAT IS WAY PAST ITS EXPIRATION DATE? Let it go

Now, in the quiet, invite the Spirit to transform your life

Cling to the Lord who through the Spirit will power the hard work which lies before us in our own lives and in God's kingdom. Ask the Spirit to clear it all out so you might experience the wonder of that mountaintop — and taste the glory of transfiguration.

As yes, "It is good Lord to be here."