

The Last Sunday after the Epiphany – Sunday 19 February 2023

- Exodus 24.12-18; Psalm 2; 2 Peter 1.16-21; Matthew 17.1-9

At God's command, Moses and Joshua went up into the mountain of God. It appears, however, that only Moses entered the cloud, where he remained for forty days and nights. His vision is recalled at Jesus' Transfiguration, accompanied by Peter, James and John, the "eyewitnesses of his majesty." Years later, Peter would recall this momentous experience in his second Epistle. In Epiphany, we followed the Magi, who also saw the glory of God – this time in the person of a small child. Like many others who were not granted these life-changing encounters, we don't need to go climb a mountain or make an arduous journey to find God in his glory. As you move to the altar rail this morning to receive the Body and Blood of Christ, recognise that here YOU are participating in an AWE-some event in which God is truly present to you and the other members of your congregation. You, too, may be transfigured, to show God's glory and goodness to others.

- Give thanks that, despite Covid, the privilege of freely being a communicant is given to us.
- Pray for those in countries where Christian worship is a crime; where Christians still die for their faith; and pray that we more fortunate people of God may "Serve the Lord with awe" and thanksgiving.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Church of the Church of Pakistan.

Text: Delroy Oberg St John's Cathedral, Brisbane © Anglican Board of Mission, 2023.

Reflection

When arriving for a camping holiday, the twilight only enabled us to find a flat space with no rocks, before deepening into that nocturnal dark of the outback. The rain became heavier as we unrolled and (tried to) set up the tiny tent. As the storm took hold, the water droplets at first, rolled down the inside onto the bedding, before being shaken more broadly by the turbulent wind buffeting the material. When the gas cooker popped its declaration that it was blocked, we ate a cold meal, washed down with no warming drink, and flopped, quite miserably, into the sleeping bags. However, the dawn breaking with the light of the morning star brought such breath-taking beauty into focus. Overwhelmed, we sat with silent voices as the song of the birds and trees rustling in the breezes, spoke out both reverence and joy. God's light shines into the dark spaces of reality in ways that we do not fully understand. We cannot always explain or rationalise the rich moment where Spirit and soul connect. It is often in the clanging loudness of distress, God's quietness focuses us towards the important; or the powerful brightness of hope, shines in the midst of the stormy actuality. God's grace cradles our brokenness, and we hear deep in our hearts, the revelation that we are loved.



HOLY INNOCENTS

ANGLICAN CHURCH BELAIR

Readings - Sunday 19 February 2023 – Transfiguration

Sentence

Suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him!' *Matthew 17.5*

Collect

O God,
in the transfiguration of your Son
you confirmed the mysteries of the faith
by the witness of Moses and Elijah,
and in the voice from the cloud
you foreshadowed our adoption as your children:
make us, with Christ,
heirs of your glory,
and bring us to enjoy its fullness;
through the same Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

First Reading: Exodus 24.12-18

¹² The Lord said to Moses, 'Come up to me on the mountain, and wait there; and I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction.' ¹³ So Moses set out with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up into the mountain of God. ¹⁴ To the elders he had said, 'Wait here for us, until we come to you again; for Aaron and Hur are with you; whoever has a dispute may go to them.' ¹⁵ Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. ¹⁶ The glory of the Lord settled on Mount

Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the cloud. ¹⁷ Now the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel. ¹⁸ Moses entered the cloud, and went up on the mountain. Moses was on the mountain for forty days and forty nights.

For the word of the Lord, *Thanks be to God.*

Psalm 2

- ¹ Why are the nations in tumult:
 and why do the peoples cherish a vain dream?
- ² The kings of the earth rise up
 and the rulers conspire together:
 against the Lord and against his anointed, saying,
- ³ ‘Let us break their bonds asunder:
 let us throw off their chains from us.’
- ⁴ He that dwells in heaven shall laugh them to scorn:
 the Lord will hold them in derision.
- ⁵ Then will he speak to them in his wrath,
 and terrify them in his fury:
 ‘I, the Lord, have set up my king on Zion my holy hill.’
- ⁶ I will announce the Lord’s decree,
 that which he has spoken:
 ‘You are my son, this day have I begotten you.
- ⁷ ‘Ask of me,
 and I will give you the nations for your inheritance:
 the uttermost parts of the earth for your possession.
- ⁸ ‘You may break them with a rod of iron:
 and shatter them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.’
- ⁹ Now therefore be wise, O kings:
 be advised, you that are judges of the earth.
- ¹⁰ Serve the Lord with awe,
 **and govern yourselves in fear and trembling:
 lest he be angry, and you perish in your course.**
- ¹¹ For his wrath is quickly kindled:
 blessed are those that turn to him for refuge.

Second Reading: 2 Peter 1.16-21

¹⁶ For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷ For he received honour and glory from God the Father when that voice was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory, saying, ‘This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.’ ¹⁸ We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven, while we were with him on the holy mountain. ¹⁹ So we have the prophetic message more fully confirmed. You will do well to be attentive to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. ²⁰ First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, ²¹ because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

For the word of the Lord, *Thanks be to God.*

Gospel reading: Matthew 17.1-9

¹ Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. ² And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. ³ Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. ⁴ Then Peter said to Jesus, ‘Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.’ ⁵ While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, ‘This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!’ ⁶ When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. ⁷ But Jesus came and touched them, saying, ‘Get up and do not be afraid.’ ⁸ And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone. ⁹ As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, ‘Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.’

New Revised Standard Version of the Bible - Copyright 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, and used by permission. All rights reserved.