

THE LAST SUNDAY  
AFTER EPIPHANY



This is my Son, the Beloved:  
listen to him!

## *HYMN*

*O Light of Light, Love given birth; Jesus Redeemer of the earth:  
more bright than day your face did show, your raiment whiter than the snow*

*Two prophets, who had faith to see, with your elect found company;  
the heavens above your glory named, your Father's voice his Son proclaimed*

*May all who seek to praise aright through purer lives show forth your light.  
To you, the King of glory, now all faithful hearts adoring bow*

*(Latin, 10th century)*

*(TH 1982 # 134)*



**Blessed be God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and  
blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever. Amen**



Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid:  
Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly  
love you, and worthily magnify you holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## **THE COLLECT OF THE DAY**

O God, who before the passion of your only-begotten Son revealed his glory upon  
the holy mountain: Grant to us that we, beholding by faith the light of his  
countenance, may be strengthened to bear our cross, and be changed into his  
likeness from glory to glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns  
with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## **GLORIA IN EXCELSIS**

*Glory to God in the highest,  
and peace to his people on earth,*

*Lord God heavenly King,  
almighty God and Father,  
we worship you we give you thanks,  
we praise you for your glory.*

*Lord Jesus Christ, only son of the Father,  
Lord God, Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world:  
have mercy on us;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:  
receive our prayer.*

*For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High,  
Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.*

## **THE OLD TESTAMENT**

### **2 Kings 2:1-12**

When the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. Elijah said to Elisha, “Stay here; for the Lord has sent me as far as Bethel.” But Elisha said, “As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So they went down to Bethel. The company of prophets who were in Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, “Do you know that today the Lord will take your master away from you?” And he said, “Yes, I know; keep silent.”

Elijah said to him, “Elisha, stay here; for the Lord has sent me to Jericho.” But he said, “As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So they came to Jericho. The company of prophets who were at Jericho drew near to Elisha, and said to him, “Do you know that today the Lord will take your master away from you?” And he answered, “Yes, I know; be silent.”

Then Elijah said to him, “Stay here; for the Lord has sent me to the Jordan.” But he said, “As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So the two of them went on. Fifty men of the company of prophets also went, and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. Then Elijah took his mantle and rolled it up, and struck the water; the water was parted to the one side and to the other, until the two of them crossed on dry ground.

When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, “Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you.” Elisha said, “Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit.” He responded, “You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it will be granted you; if not, it will not.” As they

continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven. Elisha kept watching and crying out, "Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" But when he could no longer see him, he grasped his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.

## **Psalm 50:1-6**

### *Deus deorum*

1 The Lord, the God of gods, has spoken; \*  
he has called the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.  
2 Out of Zion, perfect in its beauty, \*  
God reveals himself in glory.  
3 Our God will come and will not keep silence; \*  
before him there is a consuming flame,  
and round about him a raging storm.  
4 He calls the heavens and the earth from above \*  
to witness the judgment of his people.  
5 "Gather before me my loyal followers, \*  
those who have made a covenant with me  
and sealed it with sacrifice."  
6 Let the heavens declare the rightness of his cause; \*  
for God himself is judge.

## **THE EPISTLE**

### **2 Corinthians 4:3-6**

Even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

## THE CANTICLE

*Eternal light, shine in my heart;  
eternal hope lift up my eyes;  
eternal power, be my support;  
eternal wisdom make me wise.*

*Eternal life, raise me from death;  
eternal brightness, help me see;  
eternal Spirit, give me breath;  
eternal Savior, come to me;*

*until by your most costly grace,  
invited by you holy word,  
at last I come before your face  
to know you, my eternal God.*

*(c) Christopher Idle  
(TH 1982 #465)*

## THE GOSPEL

### Mark 9:2-9

Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. Then Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!" Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.

As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

# REFLECTION

by  
Norm Wright

*In the beauty of the lilies, Christ was born across the sea,  
With a glory in his bosom that transfigures you and me;  
As He died to make men holy, let us live to make all free,  
While God is marching on.*

*Glory, glory, hallelujah his truth is marching on.*

*(Julia W. Howe 1819-1910)*

*(LEVAS II # 226 vs. 3)*

**In the Name of the one who transfigures you and me.**

**Amen.**



The transfiguration of Jesus is one of the most fascinating stories in the New Testament because it is so much more than a tale of a mere, one-off, historical event. It is an **experience**. In particular, it is a mystical experience.

A few years ago, I wrote a series of post on the topic of transfiguration called, “Tales of the the Mystic Journey” in my blog, [thefaithfulagnostic.blogspot.com](http://thefaithfulagnostic.blogspot.com). In that series, I explored a variety of transfiguring moments recorded in our scriptures, beginning with Abraham and tracing this mystical journey through the likes of Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Elijah, Paul, and of course, Jesus. What is unique about Jesus’ transfiguration is that it is a **shared experience**, as indicated by the presence of Peter, James, and John. In Jesus’ transfiguration story is embedded our transfiguration stories.

Mystical experiences such as the transfiguration of Jesus have common elements: such as, a sense of disorientation. Time and place get lost and a sense of liminality, being at a threshold between the mundane and the sublime, can emerge. For instance, Abraham and Sarah experience three visitors who convey the presence of God and speak with one voice one. Jacob battles with God throughout the darkness of a night. Moses is literally transfigured from meeting God on Mt. Sinai. Elijah encounters God in the liminal sound of a still small voice. Paul has a vision of the resurrected Christ on the road to Damascus.

Another feature of transfiguration is that it is usually predicated by what I call “Pause.” Pause is a period of uncertainty that makes one stop and recalibrate one’s life. Pauses can be unpleasant moments, involve a long periods of time, or come as unexpected surprises that stop us in our tracks and make us take account of such experiences. Jesus had several experiences that gave him pause: his temptation in the wilderness, the thankfulness of a Samaritan leper, and encounter with a Roman centurion who requested healing for a sick slave. And there was

that moment in the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus was at a crossroad between going his own way or going God's way.

The greatest of all pauses for Jesus occurred on the cross itself where he felt totally abandoned by God, totally disorientated in his suffering, and wondering why. In that moment, Jesus' vision of those standing around his cross mocking him was transfigured into a people and a world in need of love and forgiveness, which he gave and which resulted in his ultimate transfiguration as the risen Christ..

In the story of Jesus' transfiguration, Peter, James, and John are placed on pause. The only reaction we witness is that of Peter's who has lost all sense of time and place during that experience. Peter's reaction is significant in that he intuitively senses Moses and Elijah being present with Jesus.

Peter also sees their presence with Jesus as a sign of Sukkot (the Feast of the Tabernacles) when he asks if he should build a sukka, a dwelling for each one of them. Sukkot is the ingathering (harvest) festival in Judaism. In this case, Peter sees the transfiguration of Jesus as the moment in which God's final ingathering has arrived.

Transfiguration is about seeing someone or oneself in a new light. Names are literally changed in some cases, Abram becomes Abraham. Sarai becomes Sarah, Jacob becomes Israel, Saul becomes Paul

In the story of Jesus' transfiguration the three disciples encounter three presentations of the "beloved son," Moses, Jesus, and Elijah who appear to be shining and conversing together as they are covered by a cloud. In that cloud, sight is suspended as the voice of God proclaims, "This is my Son, the beloved, listen to him. It is uncertain which personage God is referring to as his son. Is it Moses, Elijah, Jesus or all three? Perhaps the two are subsumed in the one because when the cloud lifts, Jesus is the only one present. In Jesus, we have the full meaning of the law and the prophets.

### **Listen to him! *Listen to Jesus !***

Listening to Jesus is what God wants us to take away from this transfiguration experience. That message is particularly important for us followers of Jesus today because we have become more accustomed to listening to things about Jesus rather than listening to what Jesus actually said and taking what he said and taught to heart and applying what he said and taught in our daily lives..

What is noteworthy about Jesus's Transfiguration is that it is only recorded in the Synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, not in John. I point this out to underscore, once again, that John is a theological Gospel *about* Jesus; a Gospel that uses Jesus' voice to give authority to what it is saying *about* Jesus. John is an important Gospel, primarily because it has shaped our thinking *about* who Jesus is and about our relationship with God through him. Nevertheless, if you want to

know what Jesus actually said and taught, the Synoptic Gospels is where one needs to go. It is in these Gospels we hear God say, "Listen to him!"

Pay attention to the teachings Jesus gave on the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew) and the Sermon on the Plain (Luke.). Take to heart the meaning of the parables found in the Synoptic Gospels because they have the power to help us mend what is broken in ourselves and in our world.

As we come to the end of the Epiphany season, I invite us to think about those transfigurative moments that have caused us to pause and see things differently; those experiences that have changed the way we see ourselves and others in the light of the One who is the Light.

Amen

### *HYMN*

*Immortal, invisible, God only wise;  
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,  
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,  
almighty victorious, thy great Name we praise.*

*Unresting, unchanging, and silent as light,  
nor wanting, or wasting, thou rulest in might;  
thy justice like mountains high soaring above  
thy clouds, which are fountains of goodness and love.*

*To all life thou givest, to both great and small,  
in all life thou livest, the true life of all;  
we blossom and flourish, like leaves on the trees  
then wither and perish; but nought changeth thee.*

*Thou reignest in glory, thou rulest in light,  
thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;  
all laud we would render: O help us to see  
'tis only the splendor of light hideth thee.*

*(Walter Chalmers Smith 1824-1908)*

*(TH 1982 #423)*



## **THE NICENE CREED (an adaptation - nw)**

We have faith in God,  
the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We have faith in Christ Jesus,  
the Son of God,  
eternally begotten of God,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten of one Being.  
Through him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation  
he came to be one with us:  
By the power of the Holy Spirit  
he was made one of us.  
For the sake of all he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day God resurrected him as a new creation.  
He ascended to God and is one with God.  
His domain has no end.

We have faith in the Holy Spirit, the Giver of Life,  
who is worshiped and glorified with the Father and the Son,  
who speaks to listening hearts.

We acknowledge the universal Body of Christ  
and affirm the forgiveness of sins  
as we await the resurrection to new life in Christ Jesus. Amen

## **THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

God of Love, we pray for the whole Church and our parish family. Guide your Church and this parish in the way of truth and love.

God of Healing, we pray for Bernard, Sue, Bev Ann, Pat Michels, Jolene, and Darold Adamson and for those we hold in our hearts. On this Sunday, we pray for Jim Black. Grant unto Jim and all in need the comfort of your healing presence.

God our Protector, we pray for those affected by Covid-19; for healthcare workers around the world; for those who provide essential services, first responders, fire fighters, police. We pray for the leaders of all nations, for all government officials every where, and for all those making decisions in times of crisis. Grant them protection and guide those in authority to make wise decisions.

God our Defender, we pray for the homeless and the jobless in our nation, and for those who have lost their homeland, their sense of security, and who find themselves dependent on the good

will of others in strange lands; that their needs are met and grant them the comfort of your Holy Spirit.

God of Life, we pray for those who have died. On this Sunday we pray for Ernest Haberman. May Ernest and all the departed find life in you.

God of Mission, we pray for all bishops, priests, deacons, and all who serve your Church. Grant them guidance in their various ministries and guide us in our mission to enlarge the Family of Faith in our midst.

## **SPIRITUAL COMMUNION**

May God be with us.

Let us lift up our hearts and give thanks to the Lord our God; for it is right to God thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth through Jesus Christ our Lord. For you are the source of light and life, you made us in your image, and called us to new life in Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

### ***The Commemoration***

Holy and Gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself; and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent forth Jesus to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us and to be one with us, so that we may be reconciled to you, the God and Father of all.

On this day, we celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, offering our praise and thanksgiving by recalling Jesus' transfiguration, death, resurrection, and ascension. Sanctify us, we pray, that we may faithfully serve you in unity, constancy, and peace: and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom. All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ.

By him, and with him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. Amen.

As our brother Jesus has taught us we now pray,

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by thy Name,  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven  
Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Alleluia! Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us, therefore, let us keep the Feast. Alleluia!**



### **A Prayer for Spiritual Communion**

Jesus, I rejoice at your coming to reclaim me and all others as the children of our Father. Since I cannot at this moment commune with you in bread and wine, I invite you into my heart where together we may be united in the love of our Father. Amen

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Loving God, we give you thanks for restoring us in your image and nourishing us with spiritual food of Christ's Body and Blood. Now send us forth a people forgiven, healed, renewed, to proclaim your love to the world and continue in the risen life of Christ our Savior. Amen.

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**May the almighty and merciful Lord, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless us and keep us. Amen**

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