

**Sermon**  
**St. Mary Nanoose Bay**  
**February 26, 2017**  
**Matt 17:1-9**

Yesterday I walked with a friend from childhood who has just become a grandmother. Because there were some minor complications with her granddaughter's birth, my friend Cathy spent 3 days in her daughter's home cooking for, coaching and reassuring the young family in the early days of their new venture. My friend's face was transfigured when she talked about her granddaughter; she absolutely glowed as she described not only the wee little baby, but her daughter as a new mother. We were both moved to tears as we looked at the photos she shared with me. It was a miracle! An everyday miracle, but a miracle none-the-less. I shared an old Jewish prayer in my sermon at my Induction 10 days ago which bears repeating:

*Days pass and the years vanish and we walk sightless among miracles. Fill our eyes with seeing and our minds with knowing. Let there be moments when Presence, like lightning, illuminates the darkness in which we walk. Help us to see wherever we gaze and exclaim in wonder: "How filled with awe is this place and we did not know it!"*

Today we celebrate Transfiguration Sunday. It is also the last Sunday of the Epiphany. And this week is the beginning of Lent. How do all these things fit together?

In the Book of Common Prayer we are given this prayer:

*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.*

So in the biblical context, the synoptic gospels (the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke) they narrate the Transfiguration as a **bridge** between Jesus' public ministry and his passion. From the time of the Transfiguration, Jesus sets his face to go to Jerusalem and the cross.

As we enter the season of Lent, we may need this encouragement and image of Christ's divinity if we are going to be willing to look inside to try to discover what is in us that gets in the way of our relationship with God. We might to be reminded of the miracles in our lives before we look at the barriers we put up to keep God at arm's length, or even further.

As Peter, James and John experienced on the mountain, we may need to be reminded that Jesus will be there when we fall to touch us and say, "Get up and do not be afraid."

There's so much in all of today's readings; least of which are all the rich images that can offer us comfort, challenge and reassurance.

Jesus showed his true nature to his friends; a small group of them. “For **where two or three** are gathered in my name, I am there among them,” Jesus will say in the next chapter of Matthew.

As with the couple of forlorn followers on the Road to Emmaus, Jesus doesn’t show them his true nature until he has developed a rapport with them.

I don’t believe Peter, James and John could have seen Jesus in his full divinity without the depth of their relationship to him. The same is true for us. Without an openness to God, our eyes and ears are not open to God’s presence in our lives.

When the disciples fall to the ground in fear, sometimes we like to translate this as awe. But I do wonder, if any of us were exposed to the radiant love of God, would we not be overwhelmed? Could we see the face of God and live?

Perhaps this is why we instructed to see the face of God in others. The miracles of daily life are enough for us until we develop in our relationship with God and able to handle the light.

Like my friend Cathy, I have seen and been transformed by transcendent light a few times in my lifetime. I have a couple memories/visions from childhood that are tinged with that holy light. But the two that stand out for me, are from my adult life. The first was during my labour with our first son. The whole morning leading up to Isaac’s birth, until things got a bit frantic, was an experience of seeing the world around me in a very different way. The intensity of the

colours out the window were unbelievable to me. I could see energy glowing from every living thing. It was a remarkable few hours.

My next experience of this holy light was 16 years ago when a good friend was dying. Becky had refused to acknowledge that she was at the end of her short life and was praying for a miracle. And then 3 days before she died, she came into a profound peace. As I sat with her, listening to some of her favourite music, a light came out of her eyes that I could hardly look at.... the love pouring out of her was overwhelming. She was transfigured before my eyes.

We have the story of Jesus' transfiguration brought to us through the centuries. Why? Maybe the answer is at the end of the passage from today's reading. The last verse reads, "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." We are on the privileged and challenging side of time of knowing that Jesus was indeed raised from the dead. We have a hope and promise that no one before Jesus' time had.

Perhaps that's why Jesus said, "Tell no one," because before the resurrection, people would have had an even tougher time believing in his divinity and would have thought he and his disciples crazy.

So if we know that Jesus has been resurrected and is with us til the end of time, does it make it easier to walk with him to the cross this Lent?

We have been made in the image of the One we follow. So it is

our destiny to be a transfigured people; people so in touch with our divinity that we don't need to talk about love, we will be love.

The parish of St. Mary's has been at the foot of the cross several times, thinking the end of the community might be in sight. Yet, over and over, we have been resurrected to new life.

This past year has been full of challenges that have been resurrected into new life. We have so much to be thankful for. We just have to open our eyes and open our hearts to the miracles and wonders God is doing in our midst!

Today at the AGM we will give thanks for the blessings of the past year and look ahead in hope to the coming year; seeking the voice of the Holy Spirit to guide our work in the world.

Let us enter this season of Lent with open and thankful hearts, asking to be transformed and transfigured and for the courage to see the light and let it shine through us.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

