

**ST PAUL'S (RONDEBOSCH)
TRANSFIGURATION SUNDAY
14 FEBRUARY 2021**

**READINGS: 2KINGS 2:1-12// PSALM 50:1-6// 2 Corinthians 4:3-6//
MARK 9:2-9**

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Let us pray

*Lord as you were transfigured on the mount,
Let that light shine on us as we hear your Word
And as we reflect on what it means to us today
As we seek to live our faith in the world
For you are Christ, light of our world*

In the Anglican Church calendar we are about to change seasons. Today is the final Sunday of the season of Epiphany and the Sunday before Ash Wednesday when we start our Lenten journey. It is called Transfiguration Sunday.

(Colours will change from white to purple.

The Transfiguration is that event when our Lord Jesus Christ was transformed in his appearance. His glory was made manifest before he set out on his way to the cross, when Jesus heads to Jerusalem to suffer and die. Thus the Transfiguration is the climax of the epiphany season and serves as a fitting bridge between Epiphany and Lent:

Today I want us to look at the importance of Transfiguration Sunday and why it is celebrated just before our Lenten journey:

I will therefore focus on three aspects of the Transfiguration

1. What the Transfiguration reveals about Jesus?
2. What the Transfiguration meant to the disciples?
3. What does the Transfiguration means for us today especially now during the COVID 19 pandemic

What did the Transfiguration reveals about Jesus Christ

The story of the Transfiguration is located almost exactly at the mid-point of this Gospel. The Transfiguration is the turning point of Jesus' ministry. Until

now, Jesus has been teaching and healing. Now he will begin his journey to Jerusalem, where he will die.

So let us look at today's text

In v 2 of our Gospel reading we read After 6 days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James and led them up a high mountain by themselves

Why did Jesus go to the high mountain? Why did he make this expedition to these lonely mountain slopes?

The reference to *mountains* in Scripture are a recognition that they were places of high moment encounter with God- Moses on Mount Sinai , Elijah on Mount Carmel, Jesus on -----on Golgotha all of them places where God was powerfully present

Although it is not recorded in our Mark reading our Luke reading of the same passage says Jesus went to pray.

Jesus therefore went to the mountain to pray. He had to make quite sure, that he was doing what God wished him to do. He had to make certain that it was indeed God's will that he should go to the Cross. Jesus went to ask God: "Am I doing your will in setting my face to go to Jerusalem?" Jesus went up the Mountain to listen for the voice of God.

V 3 "His clothes became dazzling white than anyone in the world could bleach them"

Jesus' clothes were not ordinarily exceptionally white. Jesus was a man who walked around a lot on the dusty roads of Palestine. He got in among the crowds, and people were pressing in on him, wanting to touch even the hem of his garment. He got in and out of fishing boats, which can have their own distinctive stains and smells. Jesus was not afraid to get his hands dirty, hanging out with sick people and demoniacs and low-life sinners. His clothes would have gotten dusty and dirty and stained with sweat.

But now on this occasion Jesus clothes became radiant, shining, intensely, exceedingly, dazzling white. It is important to note that Jesus' appearance changed not because of something from the outside – but because of Who He was inside.

Jesus here is being revealed in his true glory as the only Son of God. This is a manifestation, an epiphany, of the divine glory that was always his, but which had been hidden, subdued, during the days since he came in the flesh as the Son of Man. But now, for this brief moment, the disciples get a glimpse of who Jesus really is. This is God's Son; this is the Messiah, come in the flesh.

In v 4 we read “And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses who were talking to Jesus

Elijah and Moses represent the Prophets and the Law. The appearance of Moses and Elijah with Jesus confirms His Divinity

In v 7 we read this is my Son whom I love, Listen to Him

This was the same voice that was spoken from heaven at Jesus' baptism at the River Jordan in Mark 1v 11 at the start of his ministry. The voice of God confirmed the Divine nature of Jesus Christ and assured him that he was on the right way

A. So what did the Mount of Transfiguration mean to Jesus?

The Mount of Transfiguration was for Jesus a spiritual mountain peak. His journey lay before him. Was he taking the right way? Was he right to adventure out to Jerusalem and the waiting arms of the Cross?

Firstly the Mount of Transfiguration confirmed that what Jesus is about to do is right. It was confirmed by the presence of Moses and then, even greater it was approved and confirmed by the voice of God.

It was the experience on the Mount of Transfiguration which enabled Jesus to walk the way to the Cross.

Secondly the Mount of Transfiguration revealed Jesus Divine nature that he is the Son of God

In v 5 – 7 we read “Peter said to Jesus “rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters-one for you one for Moses and one for Elijah”

This indicates that Peter wanted to stay, he wanted to preserve this moment. Jesus however did not want to stay on top of the mountain. Jesus wanted them to go back down and continue his ministry. They had to go back down and encounter all the brokenness of this world and bring a measure of grace to it. They had to go back down so that Jesus can go to Jerusalem to die.

B. What did the Transfiguration mean to the disciples?

*For the disciples, the Transfiguration was one of those “Just what I needed” moments (those aha moments). They needed to see for themselves that there was more to Jesus than meets the eye. They needed to see this so that they would understand that no man hung and die on the cross but He who is “**God of God, Light of Light, and very God of very God.**”

*This vision of the (transfiguration) was meant to strengthen the disciples’ faith, and to prepare them for the difficult days ahead, when they would see this same Lord beaten, mocked, and finally crucified on Good Friday.

*The Transfiguration transformed the disciples from fearful, anxious, inactive, cowards to brave, confident, active, champions of the faith.

*The Transfiguration reminded the disciples especially Peter the importance to listen and be still in the presence of the Lord.

CONCLUSION

C. So my brothers and sisters (friends) what does the Transfiguration means for us today?

We are experiencing a difficult and challenging time because of the COVID 19 pandemic and the Church can’t even fulfil her ministry effectively.

In a few days from now we will be starting our Lenten journey and we will walk with Jesus as he makes his way to Jerusalem and to the climax of his life. During these dark days the experience on the mountain, the vision of God’s glory strengthened Jesus to love to the end and to complete the journey. It also gave the disciples the strength as they witness Jesus journey to the cross.

The Mountain of Transfiguration is given to us to provide strength for our daily ministry and to enable us to walk the way to the cross, of the COVID 19 pandemic—as we witnessed many people suffered and died

On Wednesday, we will be marked with the sign of the cross with ashes and will commit ourselves to a specific discipline. During this time I encourage you to discipline yourself to prayer, stillness and, meditation, contemplation and listening to God. And like the disciples to open ourselves to be transformed from fearful, anxious, inactive followers to bold brave, confident, active, witnesses of the faith

And furthermore I want to challenge you to use this Lenten Season to commit yourself to pray earnestly that a cure must be find to end the COVID 19 pandemic .