

Transfiguration

Luke 9:28-36

The Renaissance painter Raphael, from the small city of Urbino, is admired for his clarity of form, easy of composition, and visual achievement. His painting of *The Transfiguration* presents a chaotic scene at the bottom of the canvas. Stuck at the foot of the mountain, the disciples cannot cure a sick boy. Frustration is palpable in the outstretched arms and panicked faces of the crowd. In their midst, however, two figures point in the direction of the mountain toward the sky, in which the transfigured Jesus shines, arrayed in white. This is the Jesus Who will come down the mountain, bringing life and healing to the boy, and to the wider world.

The Transfiguration of Jesus is one of those perplexing but wonderful passages in the Bible. Not one we are called to explain away but one we are invited to experience. Luke is trying to present Jesus as the bridge between heaven and earth, and in the transfiguration we get a glimpse of Jesus in glory, the Saviour, the Son of God.

Like the two figures in Raphael's painting who see Jesus, we are called to point to the One in Whom there is healing, and hope, and a power to transform and change things. Jesus comes to save.

In our frequently bitter, angry, painful world we may be tempted to think it is all beyond saving. Disaster persists. Brokenness, sin and injustice threaten human life. Pain and frailty rob loved ones and the people of the world of dignity. Hope wanes even among faithful people. And then this story of Transfiguration calls us to look up, to point beyond, and to realise that the One Who seems far off chooses to come near. The One Who seems beyond is actually a bridge between where we are and where He wants us to be. Not distant but present.

Where is Jesus in the dark days? Walking beside us, or sitting beside us. The unexpected Saviour surprising us with kindness and courage to persevere, sometimes in our own strength, sometimes in our own strength, sometimes with the help of others, always with His help.

Transfigured Jesus offers a glimpse of what is possible not only for Him, but for us.

For you a hymn may point to Him. Or a piece of music. Or stained glass windows. Or the peacefulness in the Church. Or gathering here in the Chancel nearer to the Table. Or taking the bread and wine. Or passing the font where generations have been baptized. Or reading the intimations to see part of the rich life of our congregation. Or sitting beside a loved one. Or seeing strangers here who have also come to worship and share. Or seeing the trees beginning to blossom. Or noticing the Springtime flowers. Or laughing with a friend. Or recognizing when blessings can be counted in your life.

Transfiguration is not a one-off event. These little or big bursts of light occur all the time. We point to them, others point to them. "Look! Here shines the One in Whom there is light and hope and a way forward. Good News!"

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen