

## **Introduction**

The Sundays after Epiphany began with Jesus' baptism and end with three disciples' vision of his transfiguration. In Mark's story of Jesus' baptism, apparently only Jesus sees the Spirit descending and hears the words from heaven. But now Jesus' three closest friends hear the same words naming him God's Beloved. As believers, Paul writes, we are enabled to see the God-light in Jesus' face, because the same God who created light in the first place has shone in our hearts to give us that vision. The light of God's glory in Jesus has enlightened us through baptism and shines in us also for others to see.

## **Prayer of the Day**

Almighty God, the resplendent light of your truth shines from the mountaintop into our hearts. Transfigure us by your beloved Son, and illumine the world with your image, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

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

*Today's reading centers on the transfer of power and authority from the prophet Elijah to Elisha. Their travels, which retrace the path of Joshua back to Moab (the place where Moses died) and the parting of the waters, demonstrate that Elisha and Elijah are legitimate successors of the great prophet Moses.*

<sup>1</sup>Now when the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. <sup>2</sup>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. <sup>3</sup>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."

<sup>4</sup>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.

<sup>5</sup>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."

<sup>6</sup>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.

<sup>7</sup>Fifty men of the company of prophets also went, and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. <sup>8</sup>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.

<sup>9</sup>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." <sup>10</sup>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.” <sup>11</sup>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. <sup>12</sup>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**

<sup>1</sup>The mighty one, God the | LORD, has spoken;  
calling the earth from the rising of the sun | to its setting.

<sup>2</sup>**Out of Zion, perfect | in its beauty,  
God shines | forth in glory.**

<sup>3</sup>Our God will come and will | not keep silence;  
with a consuming flame before, and round about a | raging storm.

<sup>4</sup>**God calls the heavens and the earth | from above  
to witness the judgment | of the people.**

<sup>5</sup>“Gather before me my | loyal followers,  
those who have made a covenant with me and sealed | it with sacrifice.”

<sup>6</sup>**The heavens declare the rightness | of God’s cause,  
for it is God | who is judge.**

## **Gospel Reading: Mark 9:2-9**

*Mark’s gospel presents the transfiguration as a preview of what would become apparent to Jesus’ followers after he rose from the dead. Confused disciples are given a vision of God’s glory manifest in the beloved Son.*

<sup>2</sup>Six days later, 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, <sup>3</sup>and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. <sup>4</sup>And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. <sup>5</sup>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.” <sup>6</sup>He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. <sup>7</sup>Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, “This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!”

<sup>8</sup>Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.

<sup>9</sup>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.

## **Prayers of Intercession**

Guided by Christ made known to the nations, let us offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all people in need, saying “let us pray,” and responding, “have mercy, O God.”

*A brief silence.*

For the gospel proclaimed in word and deed, for communities of faith far and near, and for all who show the face of Christ throughout the world, let us pray. Have mercy, O God.

For creation: sun, moon and stars; life forming in the dark earth and ocean deep; mountains, clouds and storms, and creatures seen and unseen, and for the Holy Spirit’s guidance in our stewardship of God’s creation, let us pray. Have mercy, O God.

For those responsible for safety and protection: for emergency responders and security guards, attorneys and advocates, civil servants and leaders of governments, that they witness to mercy and justice throughout the world, let us pray. Have mercy, O God.

For all who suffer this day (*especially those who we name now, either silently on our hearts, or aloud...* [pause]), that Christ our healer transform sickness into health, loneliness into companionship, bereavement into consolation, and suffering into peace, let us pray. Have mercy, O God.

For companions on life’s journey in this worshiping community, for loved ones who cannot be with us this day, and for guidance during struggles we face, that God’s glory is revealed around and among us, let us pray. Have mercy, O God.

In thanksgiving for the faithful departed who now rest from their earthly pilgrimage, that their lives of service and prayer inspire us in our living, let us pray. Have mercy, O God.

Merciful God, hear the prayers of your people, spoken or silent, for the sake of the one who dwells among us, your Son, Jesus Christ our Saviour.

**Amen.**

## ***A reflection for Transfiguration Sunday...***

### Transfiguration: Amazing Then and Now

Imagine what would happen if someone from the days of Jesus were suddenly transported to our present. How would someone accustomed to walking everywhere respond to driving in a car at top speed, let alone flying in a jet? How would someone who spends their life depending on—at best—oil lamps for light respond to electric lights? It is fun to muse at how people might respond, as we reflect on how sophisticated we are.

Now imagine if the scene were reversed. How would someone accustomed to understanding much in the world around them respond to an event as otherworldly as the transfiguration? We understand volcanoes and the northern lights. We can explain lightning and thunder. We know about germs and disease transmission. So what would we do when confronted with something so amazing, awesome, and unexplainable?

The transfiguration is one of those ancient events that still puzzle us. What really happened to Jesus that day? Since we cannot go back to that time, we are left to speculate. We take stabs in the dark and make educated guesses, but at the end of the day we are left with a holy mystery to ponder.

Whatever happened that day, there is a timeless spiritual reality behind the physical details Mark gives us. God sometimes uses extreme and amazing methods to transform us when we open ourselves to the Holy Spirit. God's spirit transfigured Jesus then. That same Spirit is still transforming people today. We don't have to explain first-century miracles to trust that God's transforming Spirit is timeless and at work within each of us today. We do not have to understand everything to see the beauty of God at work in the world, continually transfiguring us into the people we were created to be.

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