

## **Sunday, February 11, 2024, Transfiguration of Our Lord**

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### **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**

<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 <sup>l</sup> LORD, has spoken;  
calling the earth from the rising of the sun <sup>l</sup> to its setting.

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

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>3</sup>Even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. <sup>4</sup>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. <sup>5</sup>For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake. <sup>6</sup>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.

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

<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 and introductions from  
[SundaysAndSeasons.com](http://SundaysAndSeasons.com)

## Prayers of Intercession

As we celebrate Christ embodied in human form, we pray for God's blessing on the church, the world, and all of creation.

*A brief silence.*

We pray for the church, that the transformational power of God enters the hearts of all people. May its leaders serve as examples of your grace and healing across time and space. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

We pray for the creation, that we will humbly observe the swirl of wind and the heat of the bright sun. Teach us to honor all you have made and to care for the animals, plants, air, and bodies of water of this planet. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

We pray for those charged with leadership, lawmaking, and governance of our towns, states, and countries, that they will strive for goodness and justice all the days of their lives and callings. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

We pray for any who are sick and suffering. Guide us to offer hospitality, shelter, friendship, and care to any in need. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

We pray for this congregation and its ministry in the wider community. May we share the transforming beauty and love of God in ways that honor the dignity of all whom we encounter. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

Trusting that all the saints, prophets, and those who die in faith are held in your care, we remember in thanksgiving those who have died. Grant us your gift of salvation as we await your coming again in glory. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

Knowing the Holy Spirit intercedes for us, we offer these prayers and the silent prayers of our hearts in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Amen.**

## **A reflection for this Transfiguration of Our Lord 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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