



The Sunday next before Lent 15th February 2026 The Transfiguration of Christ

In the name of the + Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen

HYMN

Praise, my soul, the King of heaven;
to his feet thy tribute bring;
ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
evermore his praises sing:
Alleluia, alleluia!
Praise the everlasting King.

Praise him for his grace and favour
to our fathers in distress;
praise him still the same for ever,
slow to chide and swift to bless:
Alleluia, alleluia!
Glorious in his faithfulness.

Father-like, he tends and spares us;
well our feeble frame he knows;
in his hand he gently bears us,
rescues us from all our foes.
Alleluia, alleluia!
Widely yet his mercy flows.

Angels, help us to adore him;
ye behold him face to face;
sun and moon, bow down before him,
dwellers all in time and space.
Alleluia, alleluia!
Praise with us the God of grace

Let us prepare ourselves to receive God's Word.

Introduction to confession

Lord God,
we have sinned against you;
we have done evil in your sight.
We are sorry and repent.
Have mercy on us according to your love.
Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin.
Renew a right spirit within us
and restore us to the joy of your salvation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Absolution

May the Father of all mercies
cleanse you from your sins,
and restore you in his image +
to the praise and glory of his name,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The Collect

Almighty Father,
whose Son was revealed in majesty
before he suffered death upon the cross:
give us grace to perceive his glory,
that we may be strengthened to suffer with him
and be changed into his likeness, from glory to glory;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen

Gloria

Glory be to God on high,
and on earth peace, good will toward men.
We praise Thee, we bless Thee,
we worship Thee, we glorify Thee,
we give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory:
O Lord God, heavenly King;
God the Father Almighty.
O Lord, the only begotten Son, Jesus Christ;
O Lord God, Lamb of God,
Son of the Father:
That takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.
Thou that takest away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer.
Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us.
For Thou only art holy;
Thou only art the Lord;
Thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost,
art the most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

**A Reading from The Old Testament
Exodus 24 12-end**

¹² The LORD said to Moses, “Come up to me on the mountain and stay here, and I will give you the tablets of stone with the law and commandments I have written for their instruction.”

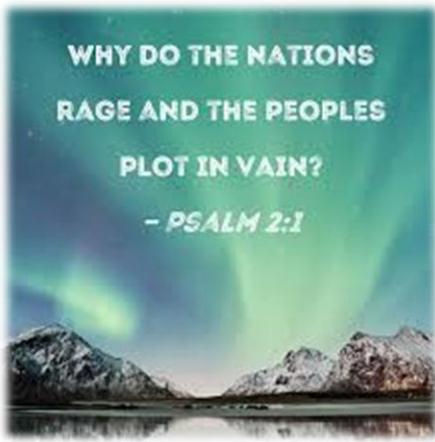
¹³ Then Moses set out with Joshua his aide, and Moses went up on the mountain of God. ¹⁴ He said to the elders, “Wait here for us until we come back to you. Aaron and Hur are with you, and anyone involved in a dispute can go to them.”

¹⁵ When Moses went up on the mountain, the cloud covered it, ¹⁶ and the glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai. For six days the cloud covered the mountain, and on the seventh day the LORD called to Moses from within the cloud. ¹⁷ To the Israelites the glory of the LORD looked like a consuming fire on top

of the mountain. ¹⁸Then Moses entered the cloud as he went on up the mountain. And he stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

This is the word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

Psalm 2



1 Why do the nations conspire
and the peoples plot in vain?
2 The kings of the earth rise up
and the rulers band together
against the Lord and against his anointed, saying,
3 "Let us break their chains
and throw off their shackles."
4 The One enthroned in heaven laughs;
the Lord scoffs at them.
5 He rebukes them in his anger
and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,

6 "I have installed my king
on Zion, my holy mountain."

7 I will proclaim the Lord's decree:

He said to me, "You are my son;
today I have become your father."

8 Ask me,
and I will make the nations your inheritance,
the ends of the earth your possession.

9 You will break them with a rod of iron;
you will dash them to pieces like pottery."

10 Therefore, you kings, be wise;
be warned, you rulers of the earth.

11 Serve the Lord with fear
and celebrate his rule with trembling.

12 Kiss his son, or he will be angry
and your way will lead to your destruction,
for his wrath can flare up in a moment.

Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

**A reading from the New Testament
2 Peter 1. 16 - end**

16 For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17 He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." 18 We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.

19 We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. 20 Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's

own interpretation of things. 21 For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

This is the word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

HYMN

Jesus, the very thought of Thee
With sweetness fills my breast;
But sweeter far Thy face to see,
And in Thy presence rest.

Nor voice can sing, nor heart can frame,
Nor can the memory find
A sweeter sound than Thy blest Name,
O Saviour of mankind!

O Hope of every contrite heart,
O Joy of all the meek,
To those who fall, how kind Thou art!
How good to those who seek!

But what to those who find? Ah, this
Nor tongue nor pen can show;
The love of Jesus, what it is
None but His loved ones know.

Jesus, our only Joy be Thou,
As Thou our prize wilt be;
Jesus, be Thou our Glory now,
And through eternity.

The Gospel Matthew 6 25-end

Alleluia, alleluia.

I am the light of the world, says the Lord
Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness
But will have the light of life
Alleluia.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew
Glory be to thee O Lord

17 After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. 2 There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. 3 Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.

4 Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.”

5 While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!”

6 When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. 7 But Jesus came and touched them. “Get up,” he said. “Don’t be afraid.” 8 When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.

9 As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, “Don’t tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord
Praise to thee, O Christ

Reflection

As you will know, in the Church of England we follow a Lectionary – a pattern of readings prescribed for each day of the year – it runs in a pattern of three years focussing on a different gospel over the year and in case you think I have my maths wrong - Mark and John run together as Mark is the shortest gospel. This can often seem confusing to people as one week we read of Jesus' actions as a man and then the next, it is about an event that happened to him as a child.

Epiphany season is a good example – the magi visit the young child – then we read about incidents in Jesus' life including his baptism and at the end of Epiphany we celebrate Candlemas and the child Jesus being presented at the Temple. It can all be rather confusing, and I often wonder what people new to the faith make of it. The point is that the seasons follow a theme and take readings to fit. The season of Epiphany which we have just left means revelation and the readings reveal Christ as a light to all the world.

I mention this because this week's reading – the Transfiguration, seems to come out of nowhere – the actual feast celebrating and observing this is in August, but here we have it on the brink of our journey into Lent.

This was a hugely significant event in the life of Jesus and in the understanding of the disciples and has significance and understand for us also. Matthew, Mark and Luke each set it in the same place in their accounts and this is important to note.

Earlier Jesus takes his disciples aside and asks them “who do men say that I am?”. Now these men had been in his close company for probably three years. They had seen extraordinary things and heard unparalleled teaching. They had witnessed Jesus confounding those who tried to trick and test him. They had seen him pay scant heed to the fussing demands of the religious leaders, he had touched the unclean and the dead, broken the sabbath laws, spoken on equal terms with women, and mixed freely with the outcasts of society. He was no ordinary man.

There was a quality about Jesus that set him apart. We have cosied him down but that was not how he was regarded even by his disciples – especially by his disciples. Reading between the lines and you see a sense of awe and even fear.

I do not think he was a comfortable person in some respects because he knew the heart of man, he could see clearly and spoke plainly. He is not dress things up but went to the heart of the matter. But it would appear that people were not destroyed by that because of the great compassion which they sensed lay behind it.

So now Jesus asks them – “Who do you think I am?”, and Peter blurts out “You are the Christ the Son of God.” “You are absolutely right Peter”, Jesus replies, “but flesh and blood did not reveal that to you but my father in heaven.” And at this pivotal point the very next thing he tells them is that he is to suffer and die.

Jesus had to wait until their understanding was clear and only then could he tell them that he is not the Messiah the Jews expected, rather ‘suffering servant’ prophesised by Isaiah. Jesus wants to make certain that the disciples understand at least these three things: that he is the divine son of Man, the Christ, that he will be killed, that discipleship will be costly and require them to die to self. None of that an easy understanding.

Now six days later he takes his three closest – Peter, James and John up into the hills and they experience this unique event. We can never really explain it – just wonder at it. For a brief moment they see Jesus changed and filled with light. Something of the glory he had with the father before he took flesh and lived with us, breaks through. It is indescribable and the men are filled with fear.

Moses and Elijah appear also bathed in this light and they speak of his death. And a cloud and a voice, however they heard it, "This is my son the beloved, listen to him."

What did this mean to Jesus? Perhaps we might conjecture that for him it was confirmation that he was perfectly within the will of his Father.

What did this mean to the disciples? I am sure this confirmed to them just who Jesus was and must have given them great strength as they set out with him to what could also be their death. We know how significant this was for them, both Peter and John refer to this event in their letters.

If you had witnessed such a thing, would it not have laid a foundation deep in you that could not be removed? They experienced his glory confirming in every way the deity of Jesus.

What does this mean for us? We are setting out on our Lenten observance. This reading can be for us that same assurance of Jesus' lordship that which was received by Peter, James and John who witnessed the divine glory shining in the face of Jesus Christ. They saw this before the events of Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension and yet it is to this that Peter and John refer, such was its effect on them. It was a shining foretaste of a reality beyond to which the resurrection and ascension affirm.

What is this glory, this word we use so freely in our liturgy? What does it mean when we say "For thine is the kingdom the power and the glory." It is the term used to describe the essential nature, the perfection of the Deity.

When we come to Christ, when we receive him into our lives a divine exchange takes place. He takes our life and give us his. Martin Luther described it as 'the great exchange'. We become 'partakers of the divine nature'. The life of God comes to dwell in us in the person of the Holy Spirit and the work of the Spirit is to mature us in our faith that we come to a place where we can reflect his glory to the world.

This feels an awesome responsibility. It matters how we live if we call ourselves Christian, it is not a 'life choice' like deciding to be vegan. As Christians we are called to be different. Jesus himself warns us the path he proposes goes against the flow, even making us challenge society by the way we live and, as a result, becoming a nuisance.

Think for a moment about your day as you read this (as I do as I write), how would our lives be different if we lived this day as for God's glory? How might we do our work, be with our family and friends, if we were doing it for the praise of God's glory? What difference could we make if we realised, and put into practice, that we can be bearers of transfiguring light in a darkened world? How can we make all of this more than mere thoughts and words?

'Let your light so shine that men may see your good works and praise your Father in heaven.' (Jesus)

The Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth;
And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried.
He descended into hell.

The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father almighty.
From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Intercessions

God of compassion,
we pray for our world, for places of extreme tragedy, anxiety and grief,
the victims of natural disasters, for victims of violence or continuing war.
The weak, the disposed, the trafficked, those marginalised by society.
We hold in our thoughts and in your creating love the suffering of our world.
Where we have no words to form our prayers – hear our hearts
Hear us, good Lord.

God the fountain of all wisdom,
we pray for all Christian people;
for all who seek to love and follow Jesus
for and for all Christian leaders
especially at this challenging time in our world
for all those who teach and guard the faith ...
May the word of Christ dwell richly in our hearts,
and knit us together in the bond of your love.
Hear us, good Lord.

We pray for the leaders of the nations,
and for those in authority under them.
Recognising the effect of power and its consequences.
let intransigence and evil be restrained in your good purposes.
may your spirit be present.
Give them the gift of your wisdom,
and a right discernment in all things.
Hear us, good Lord.

We pray for our local communities;
for those with whom we live and work,
for our own homes and relationships.
Speak your word of peace in our midst,
and help us to serve one another as Christ has served us.
Hear us, good Lord.

We pray for those who do not believe,
and yet who long to know you, the very Word of life ...
Open their ears to hear your voice,
and open their hearts to the knowledge
of your love in Christ.
Hear us, good Lord.

God of mercy, we pray for those bowed down with grief,
fear or sickness,
those who struggle to find peace and equilibrium in their mind
May your gentle, live-giving mercy be upon them, we name...
Hear us, good Lord.

We give thanks for all those who have died in the
faith of Christ and we rejoice with all your saints.
We hold those whose faith was known only to you,
who lived in quiet holiness and whose prayers you know.
We hold those who professed no belief or faith in you,
yet were the known of you and embraced in creative love.
So many people have enriched our lives,
others we remember perhaps with pain or sorrow – we them commit to you.
Hear us good Lord.

Let us commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray,
to the mercy and protection of God.
Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your
Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours now and for ever.
Amen.

And the blessing of God almighty, +
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.
Amen.

HYMN

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of
creation!
O my soul, praise Him, for He is thy health and
salvation!
All ye who hear, now to His temple draw near;
Praise Him in glad adoration.

Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things so
wondrously reigneth,
Shelters thee under His wings, yea, so gently
sustaineth!
Hast thou not seen how thy desires e'er have
been
Granted in what He ordaineth?

Praise to the Lord, who doth prosper thy work
and defend thee;
Surely His goodness and mercy here daily attend
thee;
Ponder anew what the Almighty can do,
If with His love He befriend thee.

Praise to the Lord, oh, let all that is in me adore
Him!
All that hath life and breath, come now with
praises before Him;
Let the Amen sound from His people again,
Gladly for aye we adore Him.

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