

**Sunday 7 August 2022,
The Feast of the Transfiguration**

Collect:

Father in heaven,
whose Son Jesus Christ was wonderfully transfigured
before chosen witnesses upon the holy mountain,
and spoke of the exodus he would accomplish at Jerusalem:
give us strength so to hear his voice and bear our cross
that in the world to come we may see him as he is;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Readings for this week:

Daniel 7:9-10,13-14; Psalm 97; 2 Peter 1:16-19; Luke 9:28-36

The event we now call ‘the transfiguration’ is commemorated twice each liturgical year. Firstly, on the Sunday before Ash Wednesday, as the pivotal moment that leads us from Advent to Lent, from Jesus’ birth and ministry to the Cross. Recalling this moment again on 6 August, in the midst of Ordinary Time, allows us the opportunity to focus more finely on its importance without being overwhelmed by the shadow of the Cross.

Psalm 97 describes the fearsome glory of God. God is not a tame lion, not a carved image that can be pocketed and domesticated. Dangerous and free, God judges, acts, out of righteousness but without constraint; omnipotent and eternal. Such is the Ancient One depicted in Daniel 7, simultaneously pure and terrifying, utterly glorious. The ‘one like a human being’ in verse 13 has long been believed by Christian commentators to be an image of Jesus, the Son, taking on the role conferred on him by the Father. It reminds us that Jesus is not just a babe in the manger but also a manifestation of the awesomeness of God. This is what Peter and the other disciples glimpse on the mountain, and it almost blows their minds, remaining with them as an image that sustains them throughout their ministries. The closeness they feel to God in that moment, even though it is almost too much for them to bear, gives them the energy and the insight to keep following Jesus post his ascension. They have known that nearness of God and they believe that it is possible for each of us to be in touch with the one who made us. More than that, they understand that despite being utterly ‘other’ God wishes to reach out and meet with each of us. Perhaps, in the end, the Transfiguration is less about God’s glory and more about God’s humility, in deliberately forsaking such power for the love of each of us.

Holy God,
we see your glory in the face of Jesus Christ:
may we who are partakers at his table
reflect his life in word and deed,
that all the world may know his power to change and save.
This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Readings for next week:

Isaiah 61:10,11; Psalm 45:10-17; Revelation 11:19-12:6, 10; Luke 1:46-55
A Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary