

*Sermon*  
*Last Epiphany 2011*  
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The transfiguration  
of our Lord is as  
mysterious to us today  
as it was to Peter,  
James and John.

Today's festival  
ends the cycle of worship  
we began at Advent,  
the celebration of Jesus  
as God's beloved child  
who has come not  
to be served but to serve.

We end this season  
on a high note –  
Jesus is declared  
more than prophet,  
Jesus is announced  
as God's beloved son.

But the events that follow  
this mountain top experience  
take us through  
the darks woods of lent  
toward the hill of Golgotha.

For this week  
on Ash Wednesday  
we begin the time of Lent,

the time of intentional  
journeying toward  
the dark day of Good Friday  
and the Easter joy of resurrection.

But today  
has its own message.  
The bible claims  
mountains as places  
for revelation and mystery.

Moses waited six days  
on the mountain  
covered in clouds  
as he anticipated God's law.

Today, Jesus and his close friends  
**Peter, James and John**  
go to the mountain  
where Jesus is declared  
the new law,  
the fulfillment of all laws  
because Jesus is declared  
son.

This is almost too much  
For them.  
The disciples are already  
reeling from seeing  
Jesus shining in light,  
bathed in a heavenly glow,  
surrounded by the most  
highly revered prophets  
of their faith; Moses and Elijah.

They, like us,  
are limited in their  
understanding of theophanies.

Peter, perhaps wanting  
to hold onto the moment,  
suggests that they  
stay where they are,  
build booths for the prophets  
and live in the shining  
glory of God.

It is tempting  
to want to stay  
in those places  
where we find God's love  
and comfort  
It is tempting  
to want to build  
a house around our faith  
and keep ourselves  
only in that place  
where we most find God.

But this is not  
what we are called to do  
and it is not why Jesus  
the Christ was born.

The presence of Moses and Elijah  
make his continuity  
with the history  
of the faith apparent,  
but what's not apparent  
is that Jesus represents

the present and the future.

And that present is on the move,  
not staying home.

And the disciples are afraid.

After all,  
the ancients believed  
that to see  
the face of God  
was to invite death.

Yet the disciples  
stand in the presence  
of God's son and never realize  
that he is the very antidote  
to death.

Dramatically though,  
before any booths  
can be built,  
God declares,  
"This is my son,  
my beloved.  
Listen to him!"

Listen to him.  
It's hard to listen  
to what Jesus has to say  
because he is not saying  
what they want to hear.  
he is not explaining  
why Moses and Elijah  
are on the mountain top.

He is not explaining

why he is God's beloved and  
he's not saying that he has come  
to usher in a reign  
of secular power  
over the occupying forces  
of Rome.

No, Jesus tells them  
that his plans  
do not involve  
staying where it is safe,  
basking in God's presence  
or even basking  
in his own identity  
as God's son.

He is headed toward  
Jerusalem and death.

Now that's a journey  
that we will be taking  
throughout lent.

After our wonderful visit  
with Bishop Scantlebury and his wife  
next Sunday  
we will be spending  
our Sundays with Jesus  
on his last day of earth.

Every Sunday  
we will look at a portion  
of that last day –  
the 24 hours  
that changed history.

We'll look at the gospel,  
we'll look at the history,  
we'll look at the meaning  
for our life today.

This sermon series  
is inspired by  
Adam Hamilton's book  
"24 hours  
that changed the world."

What I'm most excited about  
is the DVD  
that he created  
to supplement this book.

Each Sunday (after the 10 a.m. service)  
I'll be showing  
a 10 minute portion  
of the DVD –  
notice it's just 10 minutes –  
I am not going  
to hijack our coffee hour.

The DVD was produced  
in the Holy Land  
and gives us unique information  
about the events  
of that day's gospel,  
takes us to the present  
day location  
and provides one of  
the most interesting  
presentations

on this material  
that I've ever seen.

((((If you 8:00 service folks  
Are interested, I'm happy  
To show the DVD after this service as well. ))))

There will be no  
formal discussion time  
after the DVD,  
although I hope  
it will inspire conversation.

The purpose is for us  
to spend just 10 minutes  
on the journey toward  
the crucifixion  
and find a deep meaning  
in the path of lent.

Now this is not  
the only Lenten study  
we are offering.

Our biggest endeavor  
occurs on the Thursday evenings  
in Lent when we will be  
offering a fantastic series  
on Anglican prayer  
and spirituality.

We do this in conjunction  
with our friends at St. Simon's.  
We alternate hosting  
the evening  
which includes a soup supper  
and a presentation  
offered by well-known experts

in their fields.

Last year we had  
around 40 folks each time,  
I expect to have  
at least that many  
this year, if not more.

So we will need  
volunteers to make soups,  
salad and bring bread.  
A flyer is on  
the narthex table.

I say all this today,  
because Jesus' transfiguration  
is an invitation to the disciples.

They are invited  
off the mountaintop  
and into the journey  
that leads toward  
what they perceive  
as death at Jerusalem,  
but results in  
life everlasting.

We are invited  
to leave the holy  
and hospitable safety  
of our worship here  
and take a journey  
of our own.

We are invited  
to go deeper in our faith,  
deeper in our understanding  
of Christ's life and death,  
deeper in our living  
as disciples.

(((Jesus calls us to journey  
And we hope to proclaim –  
Look out world,  
The church has left the building  
And is fully engaged  
In ministry to the world! Amen. ))))

(((  
Our confirmands  
have begun digging  
into this challenge.  
They may not realize it,  
but they are leaving  
the safety of childish faith  
and beginning the lifelong  
adventure of struggling,  
reveling and rejoicing  
in faith as an adult.

A part of that adventure  
is our worship.  
One of the things  
the confirmands have learned  
is that worship  
belongs to all the people –  
and they are assuming  
leadership of worship  
this night at 5:30

when they will lead  
our beautiful service  
of evening prayer.

But first,  
they are going to do  
a dramatic reading  
of the Apostles Creed.

Now the apostle's creed  
is the oldest creed –  
and it is a summary  
of our faith,  
a summary of Jesus' life,  
death and resurrection.

To know this creed  
is to know who you are  
and why you follow Christ.

I'd like to invite  
our cofirmands  
to come forward  
to make this presentation  
to you now,  
and I'd also like to remind them  
to speak very slowly  
and clearly into  
the microphone –  
much more slowly  
and clearly  
than they think  
is necessary!

After the reading,

we will pick up  
in our worship booklet  
with the prayers of the people,  
after the confirmands  
have finished  
and returned  
to their seats.

And at the risk  
of disrupting worship,  
I invite you  
to show your pleasure  
at the gift of their performance  
with your applause.

I believe God  
will understand  
and approve, just this once.

May I present Michelle Raymond, Cole Nelson and Emily Kagan?