

Today, as the last Sunday before Lent begins, is the story of the Transfiguration, one of the principal feasts of the liturgical year. Transfiguration means a change of form, metamorphosis.

Jesus does not change into something he was not before, and the disciples are not simply spectators but participants in this event.

- According to St. John of Damascus at the moment of transfiguration Christ “was not assuming something that he was not, nor changing into something which he was not, but manifesting what he was to his own disciples.”
- St Gregory Palamas says, “Jesus did not become what he was not already, but appeared to the disciples as he was, opening their eyes, giving sight to those who were blind.”

Thus, this story is not only about the transfiguration of Christ, but also the transformation, the transfiguration, of the disciples. The transfiguration shows us the archetypal beauty of our own image in Christ. The glorified Christ is the model and prototype of who we are and who we are to become. The transfiguration reveals our origin and our *telos* – our completion and fullness. Like the disciples we are not simply spectators. We too participate in this event.

So how does that happen? When was the last time you experienced transfiguration of yourself or another?

Often our reading of this story focuses on what is seen: the change in appearance of Jesus’ face, clothes that become dazzling white, the appearance of Moses and Elijah, the glory of Christ, and the overshadowing cloud. These, no doubt, are central to the transfiguration. But I wonder if we sometimes emphasize the light of transfiguration to exclusion of the voice of transfiguration. We are looking but are we listening?

Listen is the only thing the disciples are told throughout this whole event. Listening is central to transfiguration. A voice came from the cloud and said, “This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!” Yet Luke records no words or teaching from

Jesus during this event. Jesus is silent. So, it must be about more than words, instructions, and lessons.

Listening always is. True listening is an interior quality, a way of being. It is more about the heart than the ears. And it is more about silence than words.

Ultimately, listening is about presence.

The disciples are being told to be present, be open, be receptive to the one who is already and always present to you. Listening creates an opening through which the transfigured Christ enters and transforms us. Listening asks of us intention, attention, and letting go of the things that deafen us. Anything that destroys or limits presence is a form of deafness. The following are just a few examples:

- Holding on to the past – guilt, sins, regrets, disappointments, sorrow, and losses
- Perfectionism, self-doubt, and self-hatred
- Fear, anxiety, and the resulting need to control
- Competition, comparison, expectation and judgments
- Anger, resentment, and condemnation.

Whether it is listening to God, our spouses, friends, children, coworkers, the poor and needy, strangers or enemies listening will be some of the most important work that we do. Listening is our foundational spiritual practice. It opens us to healing, reconciliation, and union within ourselves, with our siblings in Christ and with all of God's children

As we begin Lent on Ash Wednesday with the Lenten study and devotional entitled "Living well through Lent: Listening with all your Heart, Soul, Strength and Mind" we invite you to participate, even if you might feel some resistance to this call. Scripture assures us that if we Listen, God will truly meet us and bring to us to greater and deeper healing, not only within ourselves, but to our congregation and our world here on the Mendocino Coast.

Let us pray: Loving God, you call us to more deeply know ourselves, and each other in the Body of Christ. We are weary, Lord, of the long and frightening pandemic, we are exhausted by the fear and uncertainty this past year has woven

## Our Transfiguration

into our lives. We are truly in a wilderness we never even imagined before, and much of our lives have changed in ways we never knew even possible. Assure us, Lord, and comfort us as you draw us each gently deeper into your Love that all may know your healing life in Christ our Lord. Amen.