



Greetings my brothers and sisters in Christ, again a great joy to be here, as we come together to worship and celebrate the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of our Lenten journey.

I pray, that today's message will continue to lift all our spirits, as we together, continue as companions on our journey, to encourage us, as we live out our lives as Christians, servants of Christ our Lord, committed to lives of service, in His Kingdom!

*Let us pray.*

*Heavenly Father, as we gather together as living stones, part of your Church, we ask the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts, kindling in them the fire of your love.*

*Almighty God, speak to us through your Holy Spirit, and as we walk in the light of your Spirit may we grow in wisdom, always rejoicing in the comfort He brings, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

We celebrated the Transfiguration Sunday a fortnight ago, and this Sunday it's our Gospel reading, from the Gospel of Luke.

Have you ever pondered on the purpose of the transfiguration of Jesus?

In our Gospel reading today, Luke, like Matthew, follows Mark in placing the transfiguration shortly after the disciples have admitted out loud that they believe Jesus to be the Messiah.

So we can be pretty sure the disciples have already made their decision about Jesus, as the Messiah and it's not prompted by what they saw on the mountain.

It is indeed God's confirmation of what they have already come to believe about Jesus.

So why, are they not allowed to share this experience with anyone else?

In those early years of Christianity, with all the persecution from the state, and others, many followers, in the community were beginning to doubt the message.

The Second Coming is delayed, and the Romans are still in power, so they began to wonder if they had "*backed the right horse*", after all.

Hence, the witnesses of the transfiguration, Peter, James and John, are offering them an eyewitness account, the strongest possible proof that Christ is the one approved by God!

In other words, in the context of this early Christian community, the witness to the events of the transfiguration, is being used to back up what they already know of the nature and purpose of God.

They are ones who speaks from their own experience.

Now, isn't that a powerful message for us, when we share our faith with others, of our own experience!

Their temptation back then, was discouragement. *(Do we experience this on our life's journey)?*

And so they and we, need to hear again the words from God,

*'This is my Son, my Beloved' – you have made the right choice.*

But, in the Gospel context, that is not how God's words would be heard by the first disciples. They were already struggling with Jesus's interpretation of his own mission.

The disciples even have a problem, they would like to stop God's history. Peter even suggests that tents be set up for all to behold.

The temptation to assume that God is on their side, and to discount the fearful picture of the mission of the Messiah that Jesus has been trying to paint must have been enormous.

After the crucifixion and the resurrection, of course, the story can be told. The disciples have seen with their own eyes how God works, and the experience of the transfiguration can be put into its proper perspective by the reality of Jesus's death and rising to life.

They can understand that God does indeed love and approve of everything that Jesus is and has done, and they can see the pattern that their own mission must take, and that it must follow the hard path to life, not the easy road to success.

So can I finish with some encouraging thoughts to dwell upon:-

*We too may have only a limited insight into the Transfiguration, but it is enough to speak to our hearts and minds and to make a difference in our lives.*

*So, the next time we see a cloud, or climb a mountain or hill, see some sheer beauty' or lift our eyes, maybe downcast by some difficulty or burden, may we, because of the Transfiguration, lift up our eyes, and our hearts, and see Jesus only. It will and does make a difference.*

The church proclaims the story of the Transfiguration to teach us that there is no place for the disciple of Jesus (that's us), to pitch a tent, to dwell on the mountain of success and truth which occasionally comes our way. We too are so privileged to stand within God's salvation history.

At times we are all touched by hints of the glory which lies ahead, and when you think about it, just to settle for *'the seeds of the promise'*, while we are still on our journey, would be to miss the promise itself. **Amen.**