

## Transfiguration of Our Lord

### Quinquagesima

### Sunday, February 19, 2012

#### GOSPEL: Mark 9:2–9

*Mark's gospel presents the transfiguration as a preview of what would become apparent to Jesus' followers after he rose from the dead. Confused disciples are given a vision of God's glory manifest in the beloved Son.*

<sup>2</sup>Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, <sup>3</sup>and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. <sup>4</sup>And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. <sup>5</sup>Then Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." <sup>6</sup>He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. <sup>7</sup>Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, "This is my Son, the Beloved listen to him!" <sup>8</sup>Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.

<sup>9</sup>As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

<sup>2</sup>Καὶ μετὰ ἡμέρας ἕξ παραλαμβάνει ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὸν Πέτρον καὶ τὸν Ἰάκωβον καὶ τὸν Ἰωάννην, καὶ ἀναφέρει αὐτοὺς εἰς ὄρος ὑψηλὸν κατ' ἰδίαν μόνους. καὶ μετεμορφώθη ἔμπροσθεν αὐτῶν, <sup>3</sup>καὶ τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο στίλβοντα λευκὰ λίαν οἷα γναφεὺς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς οὐ δύναται οὕτως λευκᾶναι. <sup>4</sup>καὶ ὤφθη αὐτοῖς Ἠλίας σὺν Μωϋσεῖ, καὶ ἦσαν συλλαλοῦντες τῷ Ἰησοῦ. <sup>5</sup>καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Πέτρος λέγει τῷ Ἰησοῦ, Ῥαββί, καλὸν ἐστὶν ἡμᾶς ὧδε εἶναι, καὶ ποιήσωμεν τρεῖς σκηνάς, σοὶ μίαν καὶ Μωϋσεῖ μίαν καὶ Ἠλίᾳ μίαν. <sup>6</sup>οὐ γὰρ ἤδει τί ἀποκριθῆ, ἔκφοβοι γὰρ ἐγένοντο. <sup>7</sup>καὶ ἐγένετο νεφέλη ἐπισκιάζουσα αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἐγένετο φωνὴ ἐκ τῆς νεφέλης, Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἀκούετε αὐτοῦ. <sup>8</sup>καὶ ἐξάπινα περιβλεψάμενοι οὐκέτι οὐδένα εἶδον ἀλλὰ τὸν Ἰησοῦν μόνον μεθ' ἑαυτῶν. <sup>9</sup>Καὶ καταβαινόντων αὐτῶν ἐκ τοῦ ὄρους διεστείλατο αὐτοῖς ἵνα μηδενὶ ἄ εἶδον διηγῆσονται, εἰ μὴ ὅταν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῆ.

## “Transfiguration”

+ *In nomine Domini. Amen.*

The Church Year (this Church Year, the Year of Mark, Year ὀβὸ if you wish in the ABC of the Common Lectionary) began on November 27 of 2011 ἰ it was the First Sunday of Advent.

Since November 27<sup>th</sup>, we have marched through the weeks of preparation for the Celebration of the Birth of Jesus (Christmas, the Nativity of Our Lord), we have sung our way through the Twelve Days of Christmas reminding ourselves that Christmas is a *season* not a *day*, and then on January 6<sup>th</sup> of this calendar year (the Epiphany of Our Lord) we told the legend of the appearance of the Magi and their adoration of the Christ Child, celebrated the Eucharist with quiet and adoring joy, processed outside the church swinging the Thurible filled with smoking Frankincense, gathered around our World Famous Brazier filled with burning greens from the Christmas Season and chanted the Dates of Ash Wednesday, Holy Week, the Triduum (the Three Days), and Easter. We do these things not because we can't look up such dates on our calendars

or iPads! — we do them because we are church-people and being churchly we frequently plunge ourselves into ancient customs and traditions — it is our way of connecting ourselves with our ancestry, of joining ourselves to them, of being (as we say it) *in communion* with them.

Then (on the night of the Epiphany) after going inside the church and discovering that a lot of folks had a secret pinto bean hidden in their slice of the incredibly delicious Tres Leches Cake, we crowned them Kings and Queens of Epiphany, took their group photo, and then gathered all the children around the Door to the St. Joseph Room and —chalked— the date of 2012 upon that door with the capital letters CMB (standing for, of course, Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar — the three Magi) and put two little crosses on either side. If you go into the Common Room you can still see that chalk, fading a bit, but still there — you can also see the chalk of previous years. We seem to never clean off that door completely (!)

For the last several weeks since that time we have immersed ourselves in what are called the Sundays *per Annum* (the Sundays through the year, or commonly Ordinary Time, or the Sundays after the Epiphany) in which we have celebrated — among other things — the Baptism of Jesus (and the remembering of our own Baptisms), the Gospel Readings in Mark that tell us how Jesus began his teaching life, his prophetic life, his call of followers to a life-style that today we call the *Gospel*. We heard how Jesus started with the calling of a very few fishermen, and how from the very beginning, when Jesus talked about the Kingdom of God, or if you will the Reign or Rule of God, it was a kingdom devoted to equality and peacemaking and the end of oppression and most of it was a reign of God devoted to healing and restoration and hope and new life! — healing the brokenness of humanity, restoring the outcast to their rightful place in the community, and the hope that comes with all of that — which can only bring about new *life*: living in a new and fruitful and filled-up with love and joy and freedom.

In fact, along the way of these Sundays since the beginning back in Advent, we have reminded ourselves that our ancient ancestors were called anything but *Christians* (that would come much later), but they *were* called —Followers of The Way.—

All of which was and is to remind us that being a follower of Jesus is not becoming a member of a doctrine and rule-filled organization (all that would take place in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Centuries CE — with some disastrous results with which we still live) — no, being a follower of Jesus does not mean being devoted to correct dogma and teaching — but rather, and always, and eternally, it means following the life of Jesus, following the practice of Jesus, following the *Way* of Jesus.

So, in these twelve Sundays of our new Church Year thus far, we have been trying to understand how to be like Jesus, avoiding any mention or devotion to the rules of who is in and who is out — or whether we light the candles in the back of the nave first or last (in the German Pennsylvania Church in which I grew up there were specific rules as to whether you lighted the left candle first, then bowed, and lighted the right candle — or was it the other way around? I don't know and can't remember, but it was a Very Big Thing and the reason why I never became an Acolyte in the Church) — avoiding all that and devoting ourselves rather to living acts of love faithfully in our own community, in our own family, and from there in and into the world around us.

We even dedicated one of those Sundays to remembering that our congregation (this collected following of The Way) is a Reconciling-in-Christ collection of followers of The Way — open and affirming and welcoming to everyone, without distinction, with judging, without holding back the openness of our arms, for those arms are nothing but the open arms of God that expand widely to embrace all humanity, all creation.

In other words we have been reminding ourselves from our Biblical Tradition that it is a path, a journey we are on — not an escape from reality, and not a rigid devotion to non-divine regulations (Annual Meetings to the contrary ☺).

Or as one of our members put it a long time ago, as she came up to me after one of the Services, exclaiming, "I get it! The Eucharist is not a Goal to be Achieved – rather it is a Gift to be Received!"

Hooray! That's it!

And – the weekly reception of this Gift teaches us to be giving ourselves, and giving *of* ourselves. Anything less than that, anything other than that means you might be religious, even uber-religious, even pious and holy – but not quite a follower of Jesus whose whole life and death and resurrection was and is about God's Gift – and the shorthand way of saying that is – Grace.

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All that – leads us this morning to the end of this part of the Church Year and an anticipation to the next part – the beginning of the Season of Repentance, Prayer, and Giving – Lent.

Today, the journey of following Jesus leads us along the legendary story of himself taking to the top of a mountain in a Sinai-like experience three of his followers, Peter, James and John.

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[NOTE: here is where the *written* Sermon ended, the first for this Calendar Year of what I have always termed "the ¾ Sermons." The preaching of this sermon concluded a bit differently (as always) at the 8 o'clock and 10 o'clock Eucharist.

And to try and reproduce that here would only be a guess, as preaching (most of it) (with our without notes or manuscripts our outlines – ) is always (always) different whenever it takes place.

I did mention that the point of the Transfiguration Story is the weaving together of stories – God's story with Moses' story with Elijah's story with Jesus' story with Peter's story with James' story with John's story with our stories.

And I did speak about the fact that in the two days prior I had co-presided or presided at the Memorial Services of two of our former members: the first a young-middle aged woman who died tragically the week before in a horrible automobile accident on the Interstate, and the second a young adult who died suddenly from some major heart episode in his mother's arms.

And – that at these services it occurred to me that what takes place for our comforting and solace is the weaving together of our stories, with those who have died, with each other, with God – such that we find ourselves immersed in overwhelming hope and comfort and love.

It's best, I think, to read the homilies from those Services. Thus they follow my traditional "Deo Gratias" below.]

***Deo Gratias (+)***  
*The Rev. Benjamin Larzelere III*  
*Pastor, Christ Lutheran Church*  
*Santa Fe, NM*



**Helen Catherine Priddy-Bugg  
(April 29, 1960 – February 11, 2012)**

***Memorial Eucharist***

**Friday, February 17, 2012**

**Convention Centre, Tucumcari, NM**

**(With Fr. Mark Lake, St. Michael's Episcopal Church,  
Tucumcari, NM)**

**GOSPEL: John 11.21-27**

<sup>21</sup>Martha said to Jesus, ὁ Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. <sup>22</sup>But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him. ὁ <sup>23</sup>Jesus said to her, ὁ Your brother will rise again. ὁ <sup>24</sup>Martha said to him, ὁ I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day. ὁ <sup>25</sup>Jesus said to her, ὁ I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, <sup>26</sup>and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this? ὁ <sup>27</sup>She said to him, ὁ Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world. ὁ

<sup>21</sup>εἶπεν οὖν ἡ Μάρθα πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν, Κύριε, εἰ ἦς ὧδε οὐκ ἂν ἀπέθανεν ὁ ἀδελφός μου:  
<sup>22</sup>[ἀλλὰ] καὶ νῦν οἶδα ὅτι ὅσα ἂν αἰτήσῃ τὸν θεὸν δώσει σοι ὁ θεός. <sup>23</sup>λέγει αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Ἀναστήσεται ὁ ἀδελφός σου. <sup>24</sup>λέγει αὐτῷ ἡ Μάρθα, Οἶδα ὅτι ἀναστήσεται ἐν τῇ ἀναστάσει ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ. <sup>25</sup>εἶπεν αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ζωὴ: ὁ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμὲ κἂν ἀποθάνῃ ζήσεται, <sup>26</sup>καὶ πᾶς ὁ ζῶν καὶ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμὲ οὐ μὴ ἀποθάνῃ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα: πιστεύεις τοῦτο; <sup>27</sup>λέγει αὐτῷ, Ναί, κύριε: ἐγὼ πεπίστευκα ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἐρχόμενος.

**“Catherine”**

+ *In nomine Domini. Amen.*

This morning we come together to remember before God, who is the Source of all Comfort ἵ to remember Catherine ἵ and to give thanks for her life, to remember her, to remember her gracious living ὁ living always for others, living for her family, for Quinten and Cara and Madison ἵ living for her parents, Holt and Mildred, for her siblings, for Laura and Leicester and her nephew Wilson, and for Nelson and Diane and her niece and nephew Ella and Declan; living for her cousins, for Jane, Blewett, Jeff and Jay, living for her beloved, living for Jimmy.

Living for animals ἵ for Elyse, the little creature who died with her, the little dog she was taking to a new home ἵ what is that hymn by that lovely Irish Frances Alexander that she wrote in 1848 ἵ that little children's hymn that so many of us know:

*All things bright and beautiful,  
All creatures great and small,  
All things wise and wonderful:  
The Lord God made them all.*

How so very, very true. And how much Catherine lived those words.

And for her friends, who fill this place with tears and sadness in the midst of things we cannot comprehend or understand, who in our sorrow have come here and fill this place with love and the embrace of compassion as we hold onto each other knowing that each of us, all of us, sitting here in the Presence of the Holy One, our hearts joined if not only our hands to each other waiting for a word of understanding to explain to us how it could be that Catherine has died, that she is gone from us, that we have ölost herö í and for that, there are now words.

Most of us here know what it is to lose a loved one. Many of us here know what it is to lose a child. Some of us here know what it is to lose a parent í God understands all this, knows how we are broken and grieving, and in the middle of all that reaches out to us through our words to each other, and holds us, gently and compassionately and wondrously in an embrace that helps us move from one moment to the next with hope í and assures us that just as the Lord God made all things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small í it is to that same God that we not only offer up our thoughts and our broken hearts and our silent prayers, but from that God receive the warmth of hope and the comfort of love.

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I first met Catherine in 1975. We had moved to Santa Fe. I was the new Pastor at Christ Lutheran Church there (løn now the old Pastor of Christ Lutheran Church there). My wife and I met the entire Priddy Clan. They were our neighbors. They are still our beloved friends.

One of the deep privileges of being in a place for a long time is to know people for a long time and more than just being there and knowing them í it is the privilege of being involved in lives í the deep honour of being invited into friendship and the sharing of life-story. The memories of those times fill my brain to overflowing í as they do for all of us in those times when we think of Catherine, when we remember her face, her presence, her laugh, her words, her stories, her hopes, her dreams, her loves í overflowing í let us say to *over-flowering* í for it is the flowering of life that we celebrate here this morning í the flowering of life of all things bright and beautiful which the Lord God has created.

In the flowering of that life Catherine met Alan, and when they decided to marry, they asked me to preside and I had the great honour and privilege of doing that. Mildred asked me to pray for *good weather* for their wedding and I offered a small petition to the Creator of the Universe to that effect, and when the day of Catherine's wedding arrived í it snowed! í and not just a little bit, it snowed a beautiful Santa Fe Snow. We shall never forget that wonderful day, because in the blessing of that snow Catherine and Alan joined themselves together husband and wife.

In the flowering of that life, Alan died, seven years ago? I had the honour and privilege of being present at his Memorial.

And now í I am given this deep honour and privilege of preaching a homily here, today, in the flowering of this life that we know as Catherine.

Two thousand years ago, the story goes, a very close friend of Jesus from Nazareth, died. His sister said to Jesus outside the house, öIf only you had been here í ö

If only í how much those words inhabit this space today í if only í if only it had not been a freezing upon the highway, if only another time, if only one hour later, if only someone else, if only í

To that *if only* word of two millennia past the one we call Jesus said to that sister, öYes, but be assured, be certain that in God, the end of the human story is not death, but life í ö It is that same word that we speak here today í the end of the human story is not death, but the journey into the endless love of God, the endless time of God.

There it is that we commend Catherine, the one we love í to the endless time of God, the endless love of God.

May her memory be forever a blessing. Amen.

*Deo Gratias (+)*  
*The Rev. Benjamin Larzelere III*  
*Pastor, Christ Lutheran Church*  
*Santa Fe, NM*



**David Michael Meilleur**  
**(March 25, 1982 –**  
**February 14, 2012)**  
**Memorial**  
**Chamisa Hills Country**  
**Club, Rio Rancho, NM**  
**Saturday, February 18,**  
**2012**

**WISDOM OF SOLOMON 3**

But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God,  
and no torment will ever touch them.  
<sup>2</sup>In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died,  
and their departure was thought to be a disaster,  
<sup>3</sup>and their going from us to be their destruction;

but they are at peace.

<sup>4</sup>For though in the sight of others they were punished,  
their hope is full of immortality.

<sup>5</sup>Having been disciplined a little, they will receive great good,  
because God tested them and found them worthy of himself;

<sup>6</sup>like gold in the furnace he tried them,  
and like a sacrificial burnt offering he accepted them.

<sup>7</sup>In the time of their visitation they will shine forth,  
and will run like sparks through the stubble.

<sup>8</sup>They will govern nations and rule over peoples,  
and the Lord will reign over them forever.

<sup>9</sup>Those who trust in him will understand truth,  
and the faithful will abide with him in love,  
because grace and mercy are upon his holy ones,  
and he watches over his elect.

ΔΙΚΑΙΩΝ δὲ ψυχὰι ἐν χειρὶ Θεοῦ, καὶ οὐ μὴ ἄψηται αὐτῶν βάσανος.

2 ἔδοξαν ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς ἀφρόνων τεθνάναι, καὶ ἐλογίσθη κάκωσις ἢ ἔξοδος αὐτῶν 3 καὶ ἡ ἀφ' ἡμῶν πορεία σύντριμμα, οἱ δὲ εἰσιν ἐν εἰρήνῃ.

4 καὶ γὰρ ἐν ὄψει ἀνθρώπων ἐὰν καλασθῶσιν, ἡ ἐλπὶς αὐτῶν ἀθανασίας πλήρης· 5 καὶ ὀλίγα παιδευθέντες μεγάλα εὐεργετηθήσονται, ὅτι ὁ Θεὸς ἐπέειρασεν αὐτοὺς καὶ εὔρεν αὐτοὺς ἀξίους ἑαυτοῦ·

6 ὡς χρυσὸν ἐν χωνευτηρίῳ ἐδοκίμασεν αὐτοὺς καὶ ὡς ὀλοκάρπωμα θυσίας προσεδέξατο αὐτούς.

7 καὶ ἐν καιρῷ ἐπισκοπῆς αὐτῶν ἀναλάμψουσι καὶ ὡς σπινθῆρες ἐν καλάμῃ διαδραμοῦνται·

8 κρινοῦσιν ἔθνη καὶ κρατήσουσι λαῶν, καὶ βασιλεύσει αὐτῶν Κύριος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας.

9 οἱ πεπειθότες ἐπ’ αὐτῷ συνήσουσιν ἀλήθειαν, καὶ οἱ πιστοὶ ἐν ἀγάπῃ προσμενοῦσιν αὐτῷ, ὅτι χάρις καὶ ἔλεος ἐν τοῖς ὁσίοις αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐπισκοπὴ ἐν τοῖς ἐκλεκτοῖς αὐτοῦ.

## “David”

+ *In nomine Domini. Amen.*

*But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God ...*

The Wisdom of Solomon written in Biblical Greek appeared in the Tradition about 2,200 years ago. It was not written by Solomon, that’s a legend, but it was attributed to this wise ruler of Israel of ages past. The words that appear in this collection of proverbs and understandings of the human story came to us this week after what has been for each and every one of us the tragedy, the sorrow of Tuesday morning – the death of David, sudden, unexpected, and breaking our hearts.

We are looking for answers. We are searching for a way to understand what is incomprehensible. We are reaching out and grasping into the thinness of air it seems to find a way of talking about what reduces us to tears.

And there, from our ancestors and from their words and from their own experiences of sorrow and the dying of loved ones – there comes a phrase, a sentence, a writing that works its way into our minds and hearts and very being to bring comfort and gentle compassion –

*But –* we should pause there and let that little connecting word connect us to each other and to the Eternal Holy One, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, the Source of All Being, the Source of All Healing and Hope – *But –*

*... the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God –*

Yes.

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I have a photograph I have been looking at all week long. The photograph is almost 30 years old. It is a photograph of a baptism. In the picture there is a Pastor with red hair and glasses – quite young – holding a baby. Nearby is a father, also quite young, with long dark hair. The mother, who is not in the picture (because she was taking the photo) is also quite young. The baby is sleeping with a little smile of peacefulness.

The photograph is of course of Steve and myself and David and Joan is holding the camera.

One of the great privileges and honour of being in a place for a long time as a Pastor is that of being involved in the life-story of dear friends. I had the privilege of presiding at Steve and Joan’s wedding, I had the privilege of baptizing David, I had the privilege of baptizing Peter (my Godson), I had the privilege of presiding at David and Monica’s wedding – and although I could

never have imagined such a thing, I have the privilege of being here today at this Memorial for that dear, sweet, wonderful, very righteous, baby grown up.

I am not holding him any more, none of us are. Those of us parents who have lost children know that our arms ache for that moment. Brothers who lose their brothers understand the pain of that best friendship broken in half. Wives who lose their husbands far far far too early in life, know the broken heart of overwhelming sadness and sorrow.

None of us are holding David í there is our pain í *But í ... the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God í*

There is One who holds him, as that same One holds each of us, as we hold onto each other and embrace each other and offer up our words and compassion to each other to bring into this gathering and beyond this gathering the comfort of love in the midst of things we cannot understand, even death. For we are assured that the conclusion of the human story is not death, but life.

In Holy Presence David lives. We commend him to the endless time of God, to the endless love of God.

*... the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God í*

Amen.

***Deo Gratias (+)***  
*The Rev. Benjamin Larzelere III*  
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