

## READINGS & PSALM

Exodus 24 : 12-18

2 Peter : 1 : 16-21

Matthew 17 : 1-9

## INTRODUCTIONS

*These may be included in the Parish Magazine, in the weekly service sheet, or by the lector as an introduction to the readings.*

### **Exodus 24 : 12-18**

Our Old Testament reading is chosen for its likeness to today's Gospel. On the threshold of Lent we are reminded of the awesome holiness of God. This story of Moses tells us how on a mountain-top he had a transfiguring experience, as if taken up into the glory of God.

### **2 Peter : 1 : 16-21**

This letter, in the name of Peter, reminds Christians of the second century that Jesus was no ordinary man, but one whom his first disciples had seen transfigured in glory, as God disclosed him to be his Son. All the prophecies had therefore come true.

### **Matthew 17 : 1-9**

The Lord's closest friends see him transfigured upon a mountain-top, in a disclosure of his true identity. In the presence of the figures of Moses and Elijah, a cloud of glory comes upon him and the voice of the holy one is heard.

## PRAYERS

Almighty Father, whose Son was revealed in majesty before he suffered death upon the cross: give us grace to perceive his glory, that we may be strengthened to suffer with him and be changed into his likeness, from glory to glory; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Common Worship*

Holy God, you know the disorder of our sinful lives: set straight our crooked hearts, and bend our wills to love your goodness and your glory in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. *Common Worship Shorter Collect*

God of life and light, your Son was revealed in majesty before he suffered death on the cross. Give us grace to perceive his glory that we may be strengthened to follow him and be changed into his likeness, from glory to glory; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen. *Methodist Worship*

Lord God, whose glory shines upon us in the face of Jesus Christ, and whose nature is made known to us in the mystery of the cross: number us we pray, among his faithful followers for whom nothing matters but the doing of your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. *Methodist Worship*

Father you never forget us or turn away from us even when we fail you, You sent your Son Jesus who gave his life for us, cured those who were sick, cared for those who were poor and cried for those who were sad. He forgave sinners and taught us to forgive each other. For all your love we give you thanks. We open our hearts to him; we remember how he died and rose again to live now in us. Amen *Scottish liturgy*

## The Sunday before Lent - Sun 6th March, 2011

Lord, there are times when we are so concerned about ourselves that we don't think of others. We ask for the gift of your Spirit that we may grow in awareness of others: - noticing when someone is unhappy, - sensing when there's something wrong for somebody, - seeing when someone feels cut off or isolated, - knowing when to say the right word, - expressing thanks and compliments, - being thoughtful when someone is ill, - giving words of encouragement, - helping someone to feel welcome, - realising when someone needs the opportunity to talk. May we grow in sensitivity towards others. Amen.

Lord, in times of large opportunity and fast-changing circumstances give us the big vision. May your work not be curtailed by past ways of ministry; give us clean, focused aims and the grace to leave the outcome to you. Amen. *Thomas Kingston, Superintendent, Dublin District*

Almighty God, merciful Father, we are sinful by nature and have sinned against You in our thoughts, words and actions. But we are sorry for our transgressions and pray You, of Your bountiful mercy, to be gracious and merciful unto us. Forgive us for Jesus' sake, renew us by Your Spirit and lead us in the way everlasting. Amen.

### MEDITATION

Beside the head of the Queen on British coins appear the letters "F.D.". They are an abbreviation in Latin for the words "Defender of the Faith." This was a title given by the Pope to King Henry VIII, (the eighth) recalling how, in his first years as king, Henry had written a book about the Sacraments, "defending" what Catholics believe. Some years later he would be executing Catholics.

Sir Thomas More 1478, became a man of great learning, a lawyer, and the father of four children. King Henry VIII valued his friendship, appointing him Lord Chancellor, the main government minister of the time. The king knew that Thomas More was above corruption; he was a person of integrity and honesty at a time when money bought what was thought of as 'justice'.

The king wanted to divorce his queen (Catherine of Aragon) and marry Anne Boleyn instead. When the Pope proclaimed that that was wrong, the English parliament passed an Act declaring the king to be "Supreme Head of the Church in England", and Henry decided he could do as he wished in many things. This action also led to the destruction ("Dissolution") of many monasteries and cathedrals in England as the king confiscated and sold their lands and possessions.

Thomas More knew that he could not agree with what the king was doing and, even though many bishops supported the actions of the king, Thomas remarked that "their consciences must speak for them; mine must speak for me." Thomas still considered himself loyal to the king and, when he was condemned to death, he said: "I die the King's good servant, but God's first."

Let us pray: God our Father, teach us to distinguish clearly between right and wrong, that we may grow in character and develop a true sense of values through following Jesus, your Son and our Brother. We pray, too, for all who are in positions of leadership in our country that they may be inspired by the values of the gospel. We pray that they may live as people of integrity and honesty, growing in a sense of duty and responsibility, always being aware of the needy, and ready to be of service to others. Amen. *This is Church*

## SERMON STARTERS

### **Matt 17:1-9 he was transfigured....**

a key event in the life and ministry of Jesus – difficult for modern minds to comprehend – as it was for the disciples – Peter, James & John – the inner circle eg in Gethsemane...

**1. The Mountain** – traditionally Mt Tabor in the heart of Jezreel Valley – but more likely Mt Hermon rising to over 9000ft in the north - *a high mountain...* There something fantastic happened - *he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white* – Christ in his glorious majesty – a foretaste of his heavenly glory....

**2. The Meeting** – something even stranger occurred - *3 there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him.*

**a) Moses** – the great law-giver of Sinai – leader of his people in the great escape from Egypt in the old Exodus...

**b) Elijah** – the great prophet – taken up into heaven in a whirlwind – forerunner of the Messiah (Malachi 4.5).

They spoke of what Jesus was to accomplish in Jerusalem – the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets – the new Exodus!

It was to him a great encouragement as he faced the future...

**3. The Messiah** – the authenticity of Jesus' Person is confirmed by *a voice from the cloud:- 'This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!'* It was a terrifying experience for the disciples - *they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear* – but were reassured by Jesus - *'Get up and do not be afraid.'* What thoughts and questions assailed their minds as they made their way back down the mountain... The memory of it was precious to them as affirmed by Peter - *Lord, it is good for us to be here* – words enshrined in the Church of the Transfiguration on Mt Tabor. *By Norman Porteus*

## THE TRANSFIGURATION EXPERIENCE

1. Reaffirms The Divine Glory Of The Suffering Saviour
2. Points Us To the Glory & Assurance Of God's Word
3. Shows How God Knows & Meets Our Spiritual Needs

## WEB SOURCES

### **2 Peter : 1 : 16-21**

A very succinct sermon by The Reverend Canon Jeremy Fletcher and preached in York Minster which highlights the impact of The Transfiguration experience on Peter.

<http://www.yorkminster.org/worship/minster-sermons/sermon121/destination-and-journey-transfiguration--2-peter-1-16-21.html>

### **Matthew 17 : 1-9**

Gospel analysis. Good exegetical account of The Transfiguration.

[http://www.sermonsfromseattle.com/series\\_b\\_transfigurationGA.htm](http://www.sermonsfromseattle.com/series_b_transfigurationGA.htm)

Three sermons on The Transfiguration on the Sermons from Seattle site.

[http://www.sermonsfromseattle.com/series\\_a\\_mountains\\_valleys\\_and\\_plains.htm](http://www.sermonsfromseattle.com/series_a_mountains_valleys_and_plains.htm)

## The Sunday before Lent - Sun 6th March, 2011

[http://www.sermonsfromseattle.com/series\\_a\\_vision\\_on\\_a\\_mountaintop.htm](http://www.sermonsfromseattle.com/series_a_vision_on_a_mountaintop.htm)

[http://www.sermonsfromseattle.com/series\\_c\\_jcsuperman.htm](http://www.sermonsfromseattle.com/series_c_jcsuperman.htm)

A sermon which includes examples of transformational relationships in the parish's outreach to its wider community, is girded with biblical insights and a good use of the change of step in the church's year which this Sunday represents.

<http://www.parishofputney.co.uk/stmarys/downloads/SM-sermon14Feb10.pdf>

The listener is asked to reflect on a pleasant place they have visited. The scene of the Transfiguration had a similar impact on those present. However, it also is a picture of what is to come on the Christian journey.

<http://bradsmith80.blogspot.com/2008/02/be-transformed-sermon-matthew-171-9.html>