

Transfiguration Sunday March 2nd Luke 9:28-36 (37-43). Sermon: God interrupts and meets us in unexpected places.

Prayer: Come, Holy Spirit seek us out that we may carry out this ministry with love each day.
Amen

Introduction: We were not prepared to see the world as we are seeing these last two months. Our political leaders are forced to look at important border crossings with regards to illegal drug trafficking, immigration issues, business legislatures with regards to tariffs leading to the increasing unemployment rates, a threat to national sovereignty, provincial election, the race for federal election and many world leaders humbly treading a peace seeking mission for Ukraine and the world. These are a few major realities of today. What is the prophetic response of the church in these times? Today, our Prime Minister along with European Leaders will meet in London to stand with Ukraine for justice.

We are moving into a new church season. Forty days of walking humbly with Jesus through the trials, pains and joys of life's journey. The story of Luke points the direction we are called to follow with Jesus Christ.

Transfiguration is the hinge Sunday when Jesus swings the faith community from one part of the story into the next. The story is moving from Epiphany into preparation for the Lent journey. The past months we reflected on the baptism of Jesus, (God spoke from heaven) the wedding at Cana, (Jesus first public miracle at a community celebration) a catch of fish on the lake, (breaking nets) Jesus preaching at the temple, his hometown, Nazareth, and teaching the blessings - Beatitudes on the plain to a crowd of people. All these are mountain top experiences that we relate to on life's journey.

The hinge swings the story from the dark of Christmas night, Epiphany the Light has come, into the bright blazing light of the Transfiguration. The true identity of Jesus Christ is revealed-The Messiah sent by God to redeem the world. It is the moment where the bright light is too much to take in and our eyes need some time to adjust. We recalled mountain top experiences, like baptisms, weddings, campfires, nature beauty, stars, sandy beaches, sea, snow storms, tropical sunshine, bible camps, church gatherings and worship with filled music and choirs. We cherished those moments. These are authentic personal life experiences that keep the faith story alive in our hearts, with God and connecting the community.

In today's story we have an image of contrast:

Three of the disciples Peter, James and John see Jesus talking to Moses and Elijah. They are watching as Jesus transfigures into blinding light. What an amazing inexplicable experience to be in the moment with the divine. Our faith experience is our everyday lives, with all joys, pains and tears. These are transformed by the presence of God among us. The Word became flesh and dwell among us.

We reflect on our lives and see the presence of the divine. You learn to look at the demands of life and hear the living echoes of God? Together we pray for the Spirit to give the strength to endure all things. Most importantly we fall in love with God again and even deeper. We see God's faithful footprints leading us into a deeper experience of grace. We did not or cannot earn grace. It is God's gift to you.

God takes the ordinary and the everyday things transforming them as it pleases God. Each day our community is on a life-long journey of transforming and evolving to be more Christ like.

The everyday lives are filled with noise, death, sick children, war and the demands for our time. We might wish that we could stay on the mountaintop and enjoy the incredible spectacle of a transfigured God speaking with the heroes of history- Elijah and Moses. But the reality is, we have ordinary responsibilities, ordinary tasks to complete each day.

How do we find God in the ordinary? Luke 37-43

Today Jesus is coming down the mountain with Peter, James and John and invites us to do so. It is not about seeking our righteousness nor our right to stay on the mountain-top. God interrupts the ordinary things in unexpected places transforming lives.

Jesus and the rest of us are called to face our changing world, even though we would rather stick with a world that meets our expectations. We want things to go back as they were in the church even though changes have accelerated. Yet, God is still coming down to meet us and willingly carry our burdens, walking with us in suffering and griefs, through life's storms and uncertainties. The Good News is that God comes down to meet us every time we gather as a community, no matter how many of us are here. God comes down to us whether we are in church every week or not, or have forgotten about the faith story or estranged from its entirety.

God comes to us in a world that seems so unpredictable and confused reminding us that in the midst of chaos God reigns. God holds us to a faith that is rooted in the image of God. We are the Body of Christ. God comes to meet us in places of worship whether they are full attendance or scarce in numbers. God is listening to our prayers whether the budget is balance or shows deficit. God meets us here whether we have any idea where the Spirit is leading and how we are to follow faithfully.

We are God's beloved people, weighed down with burdens that only God can carry. On this Transfiguration Sunday we go down the mountain with Jesus. God is always on the way down to meet us in the spoken Word, the water of baptism cleansing grace, the meal at the table of mercy and with all these precious gifts of the Body of Christ. God comes down the mountain to meet us with hope, love, joy, forgiveness and peace. This is the mystery of our faith in Jesus Christ.

When our lives seem mundane, we remember the mystery of the faith. We meet the Extraordinary God in the everyday realities of life. Jesus Christ comes down from the Mountain of Transfiguration into the Valley of everyday realities. In the need for healing, justice, food security, a place to call home, healthcare and education The Extraordinary meets us in these Ordinary.

It is so important to receive Communion, to share the bread and the wine- the bread and cup of life. Jesus is the centre and absolute focal point of your worship. We are called to be the church where Jesus dwells with love, hope and the forgiving spirit who sustains you in faith through God's grace. The presence of Christ is with, in, under and through the bread and wine as we receive these gifts by faith.

The bread and the cup of life are the perfect representation of the mystery of our Faith. Ordinary, everyday bread and wine become for us the body and blood of Christ. It is the real presence of God in our midst. We eat the bread and drink the cup of life in an ordinary way. Through this ancient ritual Jesus shared with his followers, we receive God into the most intimate depths of our being, in a most extraordinary way.

We come to the table of Jesus Christ to partake with the mystery of our faith. Let us surrender to God our everyday lives; all the joys and sorrows, pleasures and pains, tears and fears, insecurities and doubts. We humbly ask Jesus to become Word in our flesh, to become transfigured in us, and to meet us in the life-giving bread and cup. We pray, come Holy Spirit create space to love and to faithfully serve your beloved people. Amen.

Rev. Margaret MacDonald