



## Look! There is Jesus! Transfiguration – Luke 9:28b-36

### Second Sunday of Lent

**Klara Tammany, AW**

The Transfiguration is one of those stories that like dreams are baffling. It is the ultimate mountain top experience that is hard to imagine. So, take a moment to close your eyes and place yourself in the story: You have been with Jesus as he performed miracles like feeding 5,000 people, healing the blind and the lame, or even one who was possessed. You have heard many parables and sat with him over meals with the outcast. And now he takes you a half mile or so up a mountain to a place apart, to rest and pray (or so you thought). You are there, with Jesus, Peter, James, and John.



Suddenly, Jesus' clothes become a dazzling white, so bright you can hardly look at him. And there next to him appear two men.

Somehow, you don't know how; you are sure they are Elijah and Moses. They are talking with Jesus, but you can't hear what they are saying.

Terrified, you fall to the ground, cowering. You have no idea what to think, what to do, what to say. Finally, Peter (wise one that he thinks he is) babbles to Jesus "Rabbi (Teacher), it is good that we are here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah!"



Jesus does not answer. A cloud descends over them, and you hear a voice you have never heard before, but you know it is Yahweh speaking... *“This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!”*

Holy Moly! How would anyone make sense of this? Then, as suddenly as it all started, it is over. Everything is back to normal. Or is it?

This perplexing event is a mystical experience, a direct, un-describable, human encounter with the divine, like one of those “thin places” that the ancient Celts talked about when you are blessed with a glimpse of the holy.

One cannot grasp a mystical experience with the analytical left brain alone. They are not logical. Not even Peter, James and John understood what happened that day on the mountain, so at least initially, they tell no one about it. Such experiences take time to comprehend and often become clear only in hindsight. Think of the Annunciation and Resurrection, or stories of the saints such as the encounter that St. Francis’ had with lepers and when he received the stigmata. They are pivot points after which everything seems to change. What follows the transfiguration, is that Jesus sets his sights toward Jerusalem.

Don’t we all long for these kinds of encounters? They can be very tactile and personal while also relational. It is perhaps why books and films with a theme of transformation are so popular. They are powerful stories of an archetypal desire to encounter the holy and each other. Think of films like *Chocolat*, *Erin Brockovich*, *The Apostle*, *Babette’s Feast*, *Places in the Heart* – and an incredible Swedish film – *As it is in Heaven*. Could it be that such encounters happen all the time, but we just don’t notice them?



In Lewiston, Maine where I live and work in a neighborhood with a poverty rate of over 40%, there is no low barrier shelter or warming center for people who are living on the street. In harsh winter weather, they have no warm place to go even on sub-zero nights or during blizzards. A group of agencies, including ours, began to notice that there were people sleeping on the porches of our buildings. It woke us up and we decided to raise funds from local churches to at least put people in the Super 8 Motel when the temps or weather conditions put them at risk.

Just as we were getting ready to transport a group to the hotel for the first time, a woman appeared who we had never seen before. She had been released from a nearby medical facility, was in her mid-sixties, was a bit confused and had a hard time getting around even with her walker. At the last minute, we decided to include her in the group going to the hotel with a plan to get help for her when support agencies opened again on Monday.

The rest of those in the group were men we knew. They have been chronically homeless for various reasons, often struggling due to substance use or mental illness. Some have been incarcerated. This group of rough and tumble fellows tenderly helped the woman get to the van and then into the hotel. They walked her into her room. Over the weekend they checked on her regularly.

The third morning she did not answer her door. Eventually, they found she had died in the night. Later that day we gathered to talk about

### *The Vast Ocean Begins*

#### *Just Outside Our*

#### *Church:*

#### *The Eucharist*

**by Mary Oliver**

Something has happened  
to the bread  
and the wine.

They have been blessed.  
What now?  
The body leans forward

to receive the gift  
from the priest's hand,  
then the chalice.

They are something else  
now  
from what they were  
before this began.

I want  
to see Jesus,  
maybe in the clouds

Or on the shore,  
just walking,  
beautiful man

and clearly  
someone else  
besides.

On the hard days  
I ask myself  
if I ever will.

Also there are times  
my body whispers to me  
that I have.



what had happened. One expressed guilt for not checking on her more. Another felt bad that when she didn't respond to knocks, he quipped that she was either still asleep, or dead. They all expressed that she at least had been cared for and warm. They worried if anyone would claim her things or her body.

Sitting and listening to their heartfelt concerns, my body whispered to me.

“Look! Look there, right there! Quick, or you might miss it; THERE is Jesus.”

We intimately celebrate a transfiguration every week at Eucharist. Bread and wine become more and feed our souls. May we, empowered through the Eucharist and inspired in community, seek and see encounters with the risen Christ. As a transformed and transforming people of God, may we, like the homeless ones, bring life and love into the world.