

Sermon for 11.2.18

Today is the feast of the Transfiguration of Jesus.

We hear in Mark's gospel that the transfiguration took place when Jesus took with him Peter, James and John and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves.

There he is transfigured before them. And there appeared to them Moses and Elijah who were speaking with Jesus.

Now as we know Moses was the great law giver and Elijah the great prophet – the prophet of prophets—hence we understand their presence with Jesus on the mountain, to represent the law and the prophets and it is in the presence of these two, Moses and Elijah, the voice of the Father is heard, “This is my beloved son- listen to him.”

In the spirit of our faith we believe that in this event, the transition from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant – the hand over - is taking place for in Jesus the law and the prophets are brought into completion – or are fulfilled as we say.

Now we may well think that the Transfiguration of Jesus belongs to the extraordinary side of our faith, the mystical side, and we may well set it aside as something that is beyond the ordinary and quite beyond our sense of reason and our understanding.

But here's the thing, when we think about Jesus ministry –is there any part that isn't beyond the ordinary – beyond our reasoning and understanding - isn't it all extraordinary?

His baptism by John in the Jordan, his miraculous healings, his raising to life Lazarus who had been dead for 4 days, the very nature of his presence, his prayerful union with the Father, and ultimately the most extraordinary of all, his walk to the cross, his resurrection and ascension.

Our entire faith rests on the reality of the extraordinary in our ordinary lives. This is the phenomena of our very life in Christ. **It is extraordinary!**

It is not unusual however, to try and contain or even deny the extraordinary in our faith belief.

During the transfiguration event, Peter does his best to hold what he sees before him - in the realm of the ordinary. He tells Jesus that he will provide for his, Moses and Elijah's comfort – he will build huts for them – but he doesn't know what he is saying –he can't grasp the extraordinary glory of God in Jesus that he is witnessing.

Yet, the very fact that Peter was there with James and John witnessing the event, actually made them part of it. Jesus, I believe, had purposefully led the 3 disciples up the mountain for this reason – not only witness the glory of God shining through him but for them to be part of the extraordinary holiness that took place there.

And as we know after the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost the disciples went on to live extraordinary lives of ministry in Christ's name.

The question for you and for me as present day disciples is – do we accept the extraordinary holiness around us that we too are a part of.

Do we accept that it is in us and all around us? Do we take time to see it in the beauty of the natural world – in the trees, in the beauty of the birds and in their singing to each other and to God – in the beauty of ourselves and the people around us.

The extraordinary holiness is there, in the big things and in the minutest things.

Can we welcome the day with such acceptance and awareness?

It is fair to say at this point, that such a contemplative or meditative ethos, is not easy, for in our secular and religious cultural environments there is an emphasis on productivity, competition, programs and achievement and there is often a lack of a corresponding emphasis on the “be still and know that I am God” way of life.

For me I have to say that I am still working on it – but I do know that when I consciously take time each morning to begin my day in the awareness of the extraordinary holiness around me and when I continue to be conscious of it throughout the day – I do feel that I am part of it - in union with God –and I am inspired to deal with whatever comes my way in a calmness that is very settling.

I do believe that through our baptism, we as present day disciples of Jesus Christ, have also been led up the mountain to be part of the Glory of God that was there at the transformation event and that continues to be in us and around us each day.

To ponder on this, as part of our reality each day, we do need, I believe, to slow down and “be still and know that God is God”.

Spending time in awareness of such beauty, makes for our own transformation and the extraordinary in the ordinary events of life for it is the very time that we **are** listening to him.

The Lord be with you.