

Worship at Home for February 14 2021  
Transfiguration Sunday

For this Sunday's Worship at Home, the scripture, reflection and Prayers of the People shared here are the same as our 'Bite from the Apple' podcast. Other prayers and hymns were written or chosen for this document only.

You may choose to read right through this document, stopping for your own reflection at any time, or only read the prayers or the scripture or reflection. You might read with family or friends, or alone. Links will take you to music that may enhance your experience as you move through the worship, but you might choose to visit them later, or not at all. Feel free to share this with anyone who might be interested.

If you'd like to comment or have a question, please call or email me directly:  
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In the Spirit

Rev. Joanne

Centering Prayer:

Holy One:

draw our hearts to contemplate your love, as you are the God of love,  
pull our minds to center on your way of hope, as you are the God of compassion,  
entice our spirits to ponder your mystery, as you are the God of the known and unknown.  
Amen

Opening Music: “Come and Find the Quiet Centre”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ih4QmFVOQoc>

Opening Prayer

God of power and wonder,  
we are awestruck by the glory of your presence.  
We rejoice at what we can see;  
we marvel at what we cannot see.  
You dazzle us with your brightness;  
you overshadow us as with a great cloud.

Loving, protecting, challenging, nurturing,  
you strengthen and transform us.  
May we love and serve you, in all that we are and do.  
Glory be to you. Amen.

*(From Celebrate God's Presence, the United Church of Canada)*

Scripture Reading:   **Mark 9:2-9**

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, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. 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.’ He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, ‘This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!’ Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.

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.

Reflection:

We hear this story every year just before Lent begins, usually as part of our Mardi Gras celebration. It is a big story in the journey of Jesus’ followers – a time for them to see Jesus in a completely new way, but also to affirm that Jesus was no simple teacher or Rabbi, not simply a prophet, but God’s own beloved one. They had already seen him perform miracles, healings, and feeding the thousands. They had travelled with him, eaten with him, learned from him, prayed with him.

What Peter, James and John experienced on that mountain top was both amazing and terrifying as they saw their leader and teacher in a completely unique way – robes shining so white that it was unearthly, in the company of the great forefathers of their faith.

What does it take for us to see the people we think we know in an entirely new way? Those moments are rare, I think. It can happen when a couple has or adopts a child, and each sees the other in this new role, and perhaps can watch them transform from partner to parent. It might happen when we learn something we didn't know about a friend or colleague, and it changes our perspective or our opinion about that person, for example discovering that a friend has a skill or experience like flying a plane or climbing a mountain. It can even happen when we ourselves have a transformation of our hearts, and recognize that despite their differences from us – whether that is socio-economic or cultural or gender or sexual orientation, other people are the beloved children of God.

Probably, we aren't always looking for new or different ways to see our friends and family. Probably, we aren't always looking to be transformed ourselves. Especially in these days, when we see far fewer people- even the ones we love, when our interactions with others are either over a screen or hidden by a mask. Yet I have seen people change and adapt using ZOOM for gatherings and for worship, or using the phone in a new way to call in and take part. As our worship has undergone a metamorphosis, we are adjusting and transforming our community, and perhaps learning and seeing new things about one another.

What I do know is that at the heart of transfiguration, of change, of modifications and transformation, love can dwell. God's love shone in and around Jesus on that mountaintop, and God's love can shine in and through us – revealing something about us to others – something about how we love and care for each other. Seeing things in a different way is not easy, it can be frightening and overwhelming just as the disciples experienced it. I know my own journey to recognize systemic racism in this country has been challenging, but it can be less so when rooted in love – love for siblings in humanity, love for God's way of justice.

Jesus didn't really change on that mountain, I think – instead I believe that he was truly revealed to those who needed to see him fully. We were not there, but we can imagine how it might feel to have Jesus revealed to us, we can strive to let others see our true selves and let God's love and light shine in us and through us – and perhaps bring a new perspective to those who share our lives. Amen

*Have you had an experience of seeing someone in a new way? How did that feel for you?  
Do you feel that God's love and light could transform you?*

Hymn: "Jesus on the Mountain Peak" VU 102  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y85VdUplqYs>

### Prayers of the People

God of Transfiguration,

we are grateful that you meet us in the ordinary  
as well as the extraordinary moments of life.

With thanks, we are led by your Spirit to seek you in the valleys of life,  
and on the mountaintops of our experiences.

We give your thanks, God, for all the ways you seek to transform us –  
from despair to joy, from worrying to faith,  
from wandering to finding home in you and in your community of faithful people.  
You reach out to us through the cries of the hungry and homeless,  
through the declarations of those who experience systemic racism,  
through the tears of those whose lives have been shaped by war and violence.  
And so we offer our prayers, loving God, for all those who ask us to change –  
change our ways of thinking, change our systems that oppress, change our hearts.  
We remember too, compassionate God,  
those whose lives have been altered in these pandemic times,  
and we offer our prayers for people who are unemployed, for people who are lonely  
and isolated, for people who are worried and people without resources.  
Gather our prayers God, and send us out to love and serve,  
to be open to transformation,  
and to celebrate your transfiguring presence. Amen

Closing Music: “Shadow and Substance” MV 44  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-u1BQT4\\_yuM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-u1BQT4_yuM)

Blessing:

Light of God to give us hope  
Power of God to protect us  
Light of God to give us joy  
Peace of God to calm us  
Light of God to give us faith  
Grace of God to save us  
This day and forevermore.  
Amen

*(From Celebrate God's Presence, the United Church of Canada)*