

Transfiguration Sunday 2025

Transfiguration Sunday takes place the last Sunday before Lent. We are given a glimpse of Jesus' glory to sustain us for Lent and the hard times to come, and to keep our spiritual sight healthy and focussed on Christ.

The context of this week's texts is the dramatic revelation that Jesus is not only a prophet, but the incarnate God of Israel. This revelation - totally unprecedented and staggering - is reflected in narrative or story form in our Gospel reading, and reflected on theologically by Paul in our Epistle reading.

This revelation, however, clearly created issues for the Jewish community. Their God was the God who - unlike pagan idols - had nothing to do with material, physical things. The revelation that this God had assumed bodily form and had suffered, died and risen again was therefore unbelievable to many Israelites.

This is why Paul says a 'veil' lies over the minds of his Jewish contemporaries. This veil is a mental and emotional block, that stops them from seeing Jesus in the Old Testament and stops them from seeing the Father's glory reflected in him.

Clearly, a veil of sorts was also over Jesus when he engaged in his earthly ministry. Yet in the Transfiguration - also called Metamorphosis, or change in form - the veil was removed for those disciples closest to him, and they see something of his full glory and divinity. In effect, they see Jesus already in heaven, with the dialogue between Jesus, Moses and Elijah hinting at a correlation between the Transfiguration and the Ascension, when Christ comes fully into his glory.

Moses and Elijah are present because they represent the Law and the Prophets, the full heritage of Israel. Jesus sums up in himself the Jewish offices of prophet, priest and King, occupying these offices and fulfilling them for all time for both Jews and Christians.

Luke 9:28-35

²⁸ Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. ²⁹ And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. ³⁰ Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. ³¹ They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. ³² Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. ³³ Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, 'Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah'—not knowing what he said. ³⁴ While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. ³⁵ Then from the cloud came a voice that said, 'This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!'

1. Have you ever had a revelation or epiphany about something to do with God?
2. Why do you think Peter offers to make tents?

3. What do you think stops us from understanding and seeing Jesus for who he truly is?

2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2

¹² Since, then, we have such a hope, we act with great boldness, ¹³ not like Moses, who put a veil over his face to keep the people of Israel from gazing at the end of the glory that was being set aside. ¹⁴ But their minds were hardened. Indeed, to this very day, when they hear the reading of the old covenant, that same veil is still there, since only in Christ is it set aside. ¹⁵ Indeed, to this very day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their minds; ¹⁶ but when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸ And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.

⁴ Therefore, since it is by God's mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart. ² We have renounced the shameful things that one hides; we refuse to practise cunning or to falsify God's word; but by the open statement of the truth we commend ourselves to the conscience of everyone in the sight of God.

4. What kind of 'veil' stops our neighbours from accepting Christ for who he is? How can we help remove it?

5. Why do you think, as Paul argues, that *we* are changed when we see Jesus for who he really is? What might the connection be between our idea of God and how our lives turn out?

6. Activity: write Christ's name in the centre of a piece of paper. On the left hand side, write down how non-Christians might view him, or how *you* viewed him before you came to faith. Now write down on the right-hand side how he truly is. Try to use words rather than sentences.

