

¡Escúchalo a él! [*Listen to Him!*]

Que las palabras de mi boca y la meditación de nuestro corazón sean aceptables ante tus ojos, oh Señor, mi roca y mi salvación. Amén. [Salmos 19:14]

This is the third year in a row that I have been your officiant and preacher on the Last Sunday after the Epiphany and had the opportunity to preach to you about Jesus' Transfiguration. In February 2016, with the backdrop of St. Luke's account of the Transfiguration, I talked about the time that I met Jesus, in the person of a semi-conscious Korean immigrant, who was lying on the ground at a bus stop being ignored by those who passed by or were waiting for a bus, and summoned medical assistance for him. In February 2017, with the backdrop of St. Matthew's account of the transfiguration, my sermon title was "Get Up and Do Not Be Afraid," and I spoke about how icons in the Civil Rights and gender equity movement, and ordinary people like us had and can stand-up, not be afraid, and make a positive difference for our world and our community. And now, here I am again, in February 2018, on the Last Sunday after the Epiphany, to speak to you again about Jesus' Transfiguration, this time with the backdrop of St. Mark's account of the event. This must be some kind of a coincidence, or perhaps as Father Malm might say, a *God-Incidence* [una Incidencia de Dios].

Having spent so much time studying the texts describing The Transfiguration has given me much time for contemplation about its meaning and significance to us as Christians.

So, what is *The Transfiguration* all about?

According to Merriam Webster's dictionary, a transfiguration is [1.a.:] *a change in form or appearance, a metamorphosis*; [1.b.:] *an exalting, glorifying, or spiritual change.*¹

In its religious context, as one commentator described it, *[t]he Transfiguration was the glorification of the human body of Jesus. On this occasion His body underwent a change in form, a metamorphosis, so that it shone as brightly as the sun. At the time of the Transfiguration, Jesus' earthly ministry was coming to a close. He had acknowledged that He was the Messiah and predicted His death and resurrection. Now He was to reveal, to a select few, His divine glory.*²

He suggested that, *[t]he Transfiguration provides further evidence that Jesus was the divine Son of God. And noted that, [i]t is not coincidental that this happened soon after Jesus had acknowledged Himself to be the Christ, the one who left heaven's glory to come to earth. And that three of His disciples (Peter, James, and John) were to get a glimpse of that glory.*³

¹ Merriam-Webster, Dictionary, Transfiguration. Accessed, February 7, 2018. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/transfiguration>.

² "Don Stewart: What Was the Significance of Jesus' Transfiguration?" Accessed February 7, 2018, https://www.blueletterbible.org/faq/don_stewart/don_stewart_786.cfm.

³ Ibid.

The commentator also noted that, *[t]he appearance of Moses and Elijah with Jesus is highly significant. The name Moses was equated with the Old Testament law that God had given to the people. Jesus came and fulfilled the commandments of the law and did the things the law could not do, that is, to provide an answer for the problem of sin. The law pointed out the problem; Jesus gave the solution. Elijah was an outstanding figure in the Old Testament. He was a great prophet and his appearance with Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration testified that Jesus fulfilled the prophets, as well as the law.*⁴

These texts describing The Transfiguration remind me of other Gospel accounts where God speaks and acknowledges Jesus as His son. Most notably, you will recall that after Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan River, as he came up from the water, the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And, a voice from heaven, God's voice, said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."

What is different and even more significant here, is that when God speaks after Jesus' transfiguration, not only does he say: "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased," he puts an exclamation point on His pronouncement by adding the admonition: "Listen to Him!"

So today, as when I preached on the Gospel accounts of The Transfiguration in February 2016 and 2017, I still believe that the most significant take-away is God's Admonition to Listen to Him!, to Listen to Jesus!

And, as I said in my sermon in February 2016 and February 2017, I still believe that what Jesus would most want us to listen to him about is his Summary of the Law:

'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. [Matthew 22:37-40]

And by listening to Jesus and by doing his will, we care for our neighbors in the same way that we would want to be cared for ourselves. And, as included in St. Mathew's account of the Transfiguration, in doing so, we should, **Get up, and not be afraid!**

So, in closing, I would leave you with two questions to consider: First, how have you been transformed or *transfigured* by your Christian Faith and your walk with Jesus? And, second, how have or will your transfiguration been manifested in your life.

En el nombre del Padre, del Hijo, y del Espíritu Santo, Amén.

⁴ Ibid.