

COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION
SUNDAY, 27 February 2022 – Next before LENT

COLLECT

Almighty Father,
whose Son was revealed in majesty
before he suffered death upon the cross:
give us grace to perceive his glory,
that we may be strengthened to suffer with him
and be changed into his likeness, from glory to glory;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Psalm 99

- 1 The Lord is king: let the peoples tremble; ♦
he is enthroned above the cherubim: let the earth shake.
- 2 The Lord is great in Zion ♦
and high above all peoples.
- 3 Let them praise your name, which is great and awesome; ♦
the Lord our God is holy.
- 4 Mighty king, who loves justice, you have established equity; ♦
you have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob.
- 5 Exalt the Lord our God; ♦
bow down before his footstool, for he is holy.
- 6 Moses and Aaron among his priests and Samuel among those who call upon his name; ♦
they called upon the Lord and he answered them.
- 7 He spoke to them out of the pillar of cloud; ♦
they kept his testimonies and the law that he gave them.
- 8 You answered them, O Lord our God; ♦
you were a God who forgave them and pardoned them for their offences.
- 9 Exalt the Lord our God and worship him upon his holy hill, ♦
for the Lord our God is holy.

A Reading from the Second letter of Paul to the Corinthians, 3.12 – 4.2

12 Since, then, we have such a hope, we act with great boldness, ¹³not 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. ¹⁴But 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. ¹⁵Indeed, to this very day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their minds; ¹⁶but when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. ¹⁷Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸And 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.

4Therefore, since it is by God's mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart. ²We 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.

The Gospel according to Luke, 9.28–36

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. ²⁹And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. ³⁰Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. ³¹They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. ³²Now 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. ³³Just 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. ³⁴While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. ³⁵Then from the cloud came a voice that said, 'This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!' ³⁶When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.

Reflection from Peter

We probably all remember being told as children not to look directly at the sun. It was just one of those things and, for the most part, we were sensible enough to do as we were told. In today's Gospel Jesus blazes with light and glory. Luke tells us that 'while he was praying the appearance of his face changed and his clothes became dazzling white'. The suggestion is that, in the moment of prayer, Jesus is so much at one with the Father that the brilliance and the glory of God is suddenly present, right there. This is God the Creator of heaven and earth, the God who made the sun and the other stars: it stands to reason that God shines more brightly than the sun itself. For the disciples this is a puzzling moment. They are not quite sure what is happening and keep quiet about it afterwards.

This moment of transfiguring glory is kept by the church as a special feast day in August, on August 6th, the feast of the Transfiguration of Christ. And August 6th is also a date we remember with sorrow - the day in 1945 when the American nuclear bomb fell on Hiroshima. That too produced a dazzling light, but a light that brought terrible destruction. The darkness of a Russian invasion is even now threatening the people of Ukraine and we watch and pray. It is easy to give in to the darkness, to think there is no hope, but there is always choice. We are those committed to the truth that "the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it." Are we going to turn towards the light of Christ and seek his love, his joy, his freedom? Or are we going to follow that urge deep with human beings to attempt to deal with those who cross our path with force, violence and rejection?

St Paul, writing to the Corinthians says, '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...' There is the direction we want to be heading, basking in the light of Christ that so freely pours glory on us too. May this Lent be a time for us all to bask in the light of Christ.