

Reflection: Transfiguration: Glory in the Ordinary

Readings: [2 Kings 2: 1-12](#) [Mark 9: 2-9](#)

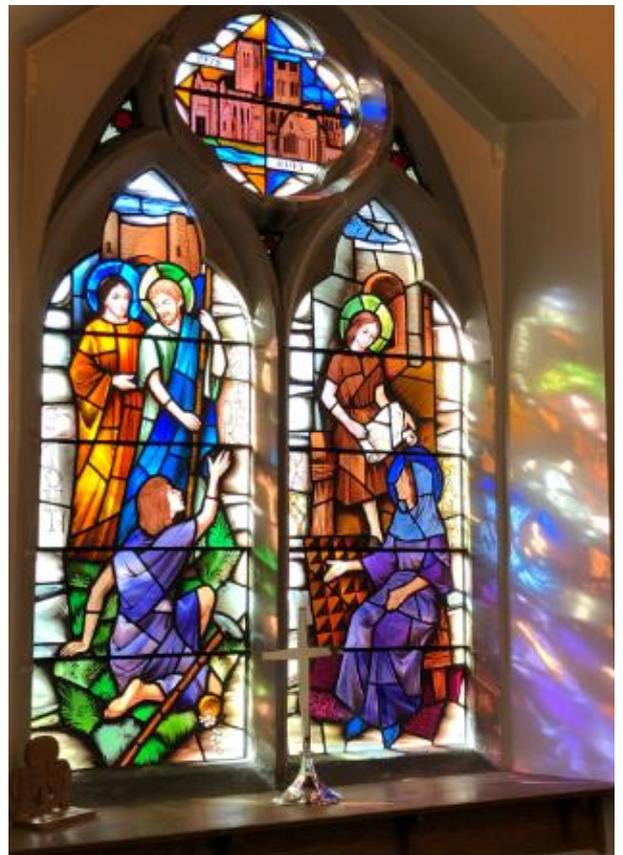
I love our stained-glass windows at All Saints' Church. They tell so many stories. However, on a very dull day, they can look rather flat and one-dimensional, as if the stories are being conveyed in the most basic of language, in terms of the baldest of facts and figures. The figures are waxen, the flowers, animals and birds look like paper cut-outs, trapped in their leaded frames.



But with only a tiny bit of sunlight, something special happens. The scenes become aglow with life. Bright splodges of colour, as if a child has been allowed to run wild with paint-pots, erupt and bloom on the walls and spill over the pews and along the floor, the light shining through the pictures becoming reflected and refracted in myriads of ways. Not only does the glass itself come to life, but it transforms our church into a glorious kaleidoscope.

We don't always see the colours washing round the walls when we come into church, but once you know that this is what happens, you can anticipate that there will be a moment when the sun will come through the gloom; this dullness will pass.

What were Peter, James and John expecting when they followed Jesus up the high mountain, possibly walking a few steps in his wake, wrestling over his shocking prediction in the previous week that "he must be killed and after three days rise again", Peter still nursing the stinging rebuke of being likened to "Satan" as he tried to argue him out of this awful vision? The day would feel very gloomy indeed.



They had a lovely picture of Jesus in their minds: the great teacher, healer and their friend. Yet their picture was simple, one-dimensional. And now that picture was under threat.

What happens when they were on that mountain and saw Jesus conversing with Elijah and Moses takes that simple picture of Jesus and throws dazzling light upon it.

Jesus is Lord: as he talks with Elijah the prophet and Moses the lawgiver, he shows that he is the fulfilment of both all prophecy and the law. The voice of God the Father peals out in affirmation: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him."

In that moment, heaven and earth come together. It is a dazzling vision, one which is both awesome and awful. It stops the disciples in their tracks, and it points to the fact that Jesus' prophecy that he will die and rise again is true. Elijah and Moses, the embodiments of prophecy and of law, and the voice of God himself all point to its truth.

As the disciples make their way back down the mountain, they can't unsee that vision they had at the summit. It is a reminder that Jesus' glory is always present, even though we may not always see it.

We have come to the last Sunday before we begin our journey through Lent. It is a searching journey, and can be very lean and harsh at times. Our days at present may feel like a repetitive slog, an uphill climb with no summit in sight, and uncertain footing beneath us.

Yet even in these straitened times, God's glory keeps creeping in. There is beauty around us, there are blessings in the kindness of others, answered prayers and a peace in which heaven and earth touch, and moments when our lives are suffused with splashes of light and grace.

We are more likely to find those moments if we obey God's call to listen to his beloved Son. Jesus led his friends to be with him to pray, to listen. Lent is a time when we too can be led to pray, to find those moments when heaven and earth meet and transform us. Even if the journey is a hard slog at times, let's develop a habit of prayer and reflection this Lent.

The Collect for the Sunday next before Lent

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.

Revd Vicky Barrett