On this last Sunday before the Season of Lent, the church celebrates a special day on its liturgical calendar also known as Transfiguration Sunday. This marks a significant moment in Jesuss ministry, as God revealed to us who Jesus was and what His earthly mission was all about. It is a day in which we are reminded of both the humanity and the divinity of Christ.

Our Gospel text this week from Mark takes us on a mountaintop journey with Jesus and three of his closest disciples - Peter, James and John. Those three elite disciples got an eyewitness account of who Jesus really was....that Hes not just another prophet (like Moses or Elijah) or another preacher (like John) who went around the region of Galilee while proclaiming a message of salvation from God, but He was the true Messiah whom the people had been waiting for generations.

According to our text, upon reaching the top of the mountain, Jesus’s outward appearance began to change (or transfigure) into dazzling and glowing white...which was a foretelling sign and symbolic of ones death. The disciples didn’t know how to react when this all happened before them. Through the clouds, the disciples heard a voice from above declaring,***this is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased. Listen to Him!"[[1]](#footnote-1)***  They also saw images of Moses and Elijah…two of the most revere prophets of the Hebrew faith.

As you would imagine, those three disciples were amazed and speechless. They appeared to be enjoying this Cloud 9" mountaintop experience, while deep inside they must be really terrified and confused by what was happening. What a rare sight to have Moses, Elijah and Jesus gathered at the same place and at the same time.

Peter, as he was well known for his impulsiveness, was certainly not afraid to speak his mind. Riding on this “Cloud 9 mountaintop experience”, he came up with this “brilliant” idea of building three shrines (or dwellings) - one for Jesus, one for Moses and one for Elijah...so this way, they can forever be remembered for this momentous occasion. This was NOT uncommon to do this, as we’ve seen in other moments of divine intervention.

Then suddenly the images of Moses and Elijah disappeared before their eyes, with only Jesus remaining. Jesus warned the disciples not to tell anyone of what they had seen until he, the Son of Man, had risen from the dead.[[2]](#footnote-2) What was Jesus talking about, as the disciples were wondering?

The disappearance of Moses and Elijah into the cloud signified that as great as Moses and Elijah were, they were still mortals and their time was still finite and had come to pass. Both Moses and Elijah were “taken” into the heaven by God, as both of their bodies were never found. Upon their departures, both Moses and Elijah did pass on their torch (so to speak) to their successors. Aaron and as we read earlier – Elisha, became the successors of Moses and Elijah’s ministries. Both Aaron and Elisha continued the faithful journey of God’s mission, just as we would also when we complete ours. What made Jesus different, however, from Moses and Elijah was that Jesus was the immortal Son of God, and the others were not. Christ’s work is timeless and his mission is still actively alive and will be completed. Christ is NOT meant for us to be memorialized or be captured in a shrine where people could come and worship….but Jesus’s ministry and mission are planted in everyone’s heart. We are the expression of God’s love for the world. **Essentially we have become God’s temple whenever we come before God in worship, and with our feet, we bring that same worship to others! Whenever and wherever 2 or 3 are gathered in God’s name, Christ is here amongst us!**

Despite Peters novelty suggestion, somehow I have a feeling that Jesus would not like to be memorialized in such a way. He wanted us to live out our faith based upon our Cloud 9" experience, but yet God does not want us to stay up on the mountain too long, as we might become too comfortable and too complacent with our mountaintop experience. God wants us to come back down the mountain where the people are and be the prophetic voice and witness of our faith. **Our ministry frontier is not meant to be on the mountaintop or within the bound wall of a cathedral, but down by the Sea of Galilee, out in the wilderness and the field where the people are - the sick, the lame, the orphan, the widow, the lonely and the friendless alike.**

God wanted us not only to **Look UP** to Heaven in prayer on the mountaintop, but also to **Look DOWN**....down through the clouds and to **LOOK AROUND** in the valley, so we can engage into relationships with those whom we are being called to and have been sent amongst.

Come to think of it, many of us in our churches today might also be yearning for our mountaintop Cloud 9" experiences.... We nostalgically think back of those Golden Days and wanted to savor those moments. But God has called upon us into a new era of being church together, as we are faced with many new forms of challenges of today and the days ahead. **Christ is transforming us every day and shaping us to be agents of his love among his people.** Each day God is inviting us to go on a new journey, to explore new mountaintops and to help others connect with God in a personal way. God has called us to be right where God wants us to be…down in the valleys and in the wilderness to proclaim God’s message of hope and to serve God’s people through our witnesses.

Over the next 50 days during this Season of Lent, we are invited to reflect and to examine our spiritual journey? Perhaps some of us just need to wrestle with a little change in perspective….on how we see ourselves and how we see others….through the lens of Christ and among the clouds of God’s witnesses of saints. **At times we may find ourselves to be in a “cloud” of uncertainties and doubts, but God reassures us that we would never fall out of God’s grace.**

 The season of Lent is not about what we give up for personal sacrifice (or out of one’s abundance) but rather it’s about what we take on and how we may see God already at work among us in our world today. **It is NEVER about us**, but **it is ALWAYS about God.** God invites us into a period of **discernment and reconnecting our hearts with Him** by filtering out any of our personal thoughts or desires that may hinder or stray our relationship with God.

 **Transfiguration means transforming (or changing) of ones outward appearance to another.** As we read in our passage earlier, the voice of God that was spoken up on the mountaintop was the same voice that we heard when Jesus was being baptized in the River Jordan, declaring Christs divine relationship with the Heavenly Father, ***This is my beloved Son, with Him I am well pleased*.[[3]](#footnote-3)**

In the same way, by the virtue of our own baptism, when we place our trust and our faith in Christ, Christ leads us to greater changes than just our outward appearances. Christ transforms us from within through our own metamorphosis of our hearts, as God reaffirmed our relationship with Him, ***You are my beloved son, my beloved daughter, whom I am well pleased.***

When we are being transformed by Christ, we celebrate a new beginning by putting on a new self. No longer do we live for ourselves but whatever we do and whatever we say, we live for Christ. As the Apostle Paul reminded us of our own transformation that ***if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation, the old has gone, and the new has come.***

Through this mountaintop Cloud 9" experience, God has commissioned us to carry on the legacy, to continue to run the race of those who came before us, knowing that the Holy Spirit will lead us and cheer us on along the side. **The work of humanity is temporal and finite, but the mission of God is constant and eternal.**

**As we embark on our journey to the cross through this Lenten season, may we BE this light of Christ that would outshine all the other lights in darkness[[4]](#footnote-4) and be the life transforming agents that give life to this world, through the living hope and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.** In the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, Amen.

1. *Matthew 17:5 (NIV)* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Mark 9:9* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Matthew 17:5* [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *II Corinthians 4:6* [↑](#footnote-ref-4)