

Good morning St John's. Thank you Lord for your presence with us and good morning to you.

Today is Transfiguration Sunday or if you want to sound really knowledgeable, Quinquagesima. From the [Latin](#) word for fiftieth. This is in reference to the fifty days before Easter which include the Sundays not counted in the 40 days of Lent.

This is a Bible story that can easily be dismissed as 'unlikely.' The image evokes a glow in the dark sort of scenario. So, what is this all about? Well, I am not sure this story is one that we need to make sense about so much as we need to revel in the mystical revealing of God.

So let's look at where we've been and where we are going. We began Epiphany a few weeks ago with the revealing of who Jesus is to the entirety of humanity. Some traveling star gazers from far away places and then the baptism of Jesus. In Mark's

gospel Jesus baptismal encounter with God is private. But in the Transfiguration Jesus encounter with God is like an LED light show. Peter, James, and John witness this amazing manifestation of God. So we begin with a quiet revealing to a bigger than imagination showing of the light of God to the world.

Novelist Mary Gordon, says that the Transfiguration “can be read as the celebration of the visible.”¹, she cites a translation of Matthew 17:5 that has God saying, “This is my beloved son in whom I take delight.” At the Transfiguration, then, “we are in the presence of delight. Delight as an aspect of the holy.”²

We should take delight in this revealing of God. It can give us insight into the delight of the divine heart. By including Peter, James, and John we are included. And the guest list for this event is impressive. The two great prophets Elijah and

Moses, that kept God's people on track and who both shared particularly intimate relationships with God. So rejoice and be delighted in the Lord! Even as we begin Lent we have the light of Christ to remind us that our time of introspection is never without hope.

Transfiguration means change. We like to pretend that change is good, but in the face of change we run, we resist, we reject the actual changing event. To embrace the possibilities that come with change is very, very good my friends. Transfiguration shows us a new way of looking at the ordinary. Simply reading this story I think it is difficult to really understand the power of transfiguration. The power of change. So I thought I would offer some personal insight into the power of change. How transfiguration, transforming can be a wonderful adventure.

Now I really like the image of God as a potter. I have done

a bit of pottery myself and the process of forming and reforming clay until you get just the shape or image that you desire makes sense. However, it is not difficult for me to also think about God as a baker. Skillfully baking cookies. All different flavors and sizes and shapes. Especially a perfect chocolate chip cookie. I considered the process of creating such a cookie and realized that it is indeed a delicious metaphor for the transformation of the human being as we walk the way.

First we have to have the correct ingredients. We need a recipe. What better recipe book for formation than the Bible. Maybe with a dash of Prayer Book. However for cookies I simply went to the back of the Nestle chocolate chip package. Why is it not just as easy to go to the Bible when I need instruction? Now we just can't throw stuff in a bowl and expect to get a good cookie. Nor can we just take bits and pieces of the

scripture and get a good answer. We have to carefully measure. How do we measure our time with God? A cup of prayer, a teaspoon of study. Do we measure our time with God carefully or do we just throw stuff in a bowl and hope for the best? Next, we have to have the correct tools. For baking this means measuring cups and bowls. What are the tools we need for our formation? Of course the Bible, but also worship, study, and community. Now what? We still don't have cookies. Once the dough is mixed it must be transformed. We put these hunks of stuff in the oven and the heat makes them melt and bubble and change from a hunk of stuff into a warm, luscious cookie.

We too must be transformed. It is when we come to the table at the foot of the cross that the stuff we are made of is transformed. The Holy Spirit melts us and we bubble and we are changed from a hunk of stuff into something warm and luscious. We are saints of God. Through change we can

celebrate the promise that we are transformed by God. By the light of Jesus, ordinary stuff is transfigured into something amazing.

So Wednesday, we will begin Lent. Lent is a season of forty days, not counting Sundays. Sundays are always Easter celebrations. The forty days represents the time Jesus spent in the wilderness as he began his ministry.

Lent is a time discipline as we prepare for Easter. It is a time of self-examination and reflection. We are guided by the light of Christ into self-examination and reflection so the outcome is the hope of Easter. Lent is a time of confession. But remember that with confession comes forgiveness. So Lent begins Wednesday and we will slow down and fast and pray. But today we will revel in the delight of the Lord and eat chocolate chip cookies.