

Dean's Letter, 23 February 2020

Dear Cathedral family, Brothers and Sisters in Christ

Today is the Sunday of the Transfiguration and the Sunday before Lent (also known as Quinquagesima, SAPB pg 87). Our Gospel reading tells the story. It is a wonderful story to use with Lectio Divina, the journey in our prayer and imagination to contemplation and encounter with God, as we journey up the mountain with Jesus, into the presence of the Father.

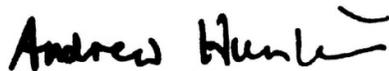
There, on the mountain, we are surrounded by the cloud of God's glory. We see Jesus transfigured, his clothes and face shining with light. We see and hear Moses and Elijah, the great Old Testament figures representing the Law and the Prophets. We hear the voice of the Father, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!" We are overcome with fear. Jesus touches us; we stand up and look around, and everything seems to be back to normal. But we have encountered glory, we have heard the voice of God, and so nothing will ever be the same again. We know that we have walked and talked with God, in mystery and wonder and adoration and fear. And we carry this event and this experience in our hearts, not to boast about it, but to draw strength and courage from what God has given us.

The Transfiguration of our Lord is a foretaste of the resurrection. "It is one of a series of supernatural manifestations by which God the Father authenticated Jesus as his Son."¹ We are given a glimpse of Jesus in glory. God reveals His Son to us as the Christ, the Anointed One, the Son of God. The Law and the Prophets – the witness of the Old Testament – all point to Jesus.

The Transfiguration provides the context for our final sermon in the "Big Questions" sermon series. We began with "Is there a God? – where do I find light?" Last week we tackled "Where do I find love?" Today, our question is "Where do I find hope?" – which touches on stress, anxiety, depression. It is easy to speak of glory and wonder, when all is light and joy. But that is not our everyday experience, and for many people, the daily reality is one of struggle and darkness and heartache. Stress is part of our lives. Many of us are anxious and worried, facing overwhelming difficulties. Many suffer from depression. It is not something that people talk about easily. For many people, "darkness is my only companion" (Psalm 88:19). There is no easy or quick-fix answer. We all face our own inner darkness, or we encounter suffering and evil. Part of the way forward is to journey deeper into the love and grace of God, to climb the mountain, to discover and rediscover God's grace and strength even in the most terrible of circumstances.

In times and seasons of greatest darkness, God is present. Our hope is in Him. We return again and again to the place of trust and peace.

My love to you all

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Hunter". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

1. Saints and Seasons, p. 91.