

INTROIT TiS 769 Now to the King of heaven

CALL TO WORSHIP

You are with us, God of sunrises:

**you awaken us with each bright new day,
overflowing with promise.**

You are with us, Inviting God:

**calling us to respond to all the opportunities
to share the spirit of grace and hope.**

You are with us, Glory of God:

**gathering us into the presence of your peace,
listening to the deep sighs of our hearts.**

Opening prayer

Come, Jesus Christ.

you are made known in every time and place, revealed to us in different and mysterious ways. We centre ourselves in your presence, seeking to love you more and to serve you in faithfulness.

Grant us wisdom as we follow you, that we may know the mystery of your grace in moments of clarity and epiphany, and the gift of your presence in the ordinariness of our living.

In your presence, we centre ourselves for worship.

In your presence, we centre ourselves for service. Amen.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY :

I wish to acknowledge the custodians of this land, the Bangerang people of the Yorta Yorta nation and their Elders past, present and emerging. I acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region.

WELCOME

HYMN TiS 143 Immortal, invisible, God only wise

PSALM 50:1-6

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Lord Jesus Christ, God's glory and love shone through you on that day you were transfigured on the mountain, and you persisted in revealing that glory and love through your words and deeds, and through your life of humble service. We hear again these wonderful words of God "You are my Son, the Beloved, listen to him!". We confess our failure to listen to you because of the influence on our lives of the gods of this world. When this happens our attitudes conceal rather than reveal your glory and your love.

If we conceal your love because our pursuit of other priorities prevents us from seeing and serving people in need :

forgive us, Lord.

If we conceal your glory because all we reflect is our own self-centredness:

forgive us, Lord

If we conceal your truth through our lack of credible witness:

forgive us, Lord.

If we conceal your justice through our failure to empower those who are powerless:

forgive us, Lord.

If we conceal your mercy because of our hard and unforgiving attitudes:

forgive us, Lord.

If we conceal your compassion because of our prejudice and intolerance:

forgive us, Lord.

Lord Jesus Christ, cleanse our lives of all shameful attitudes of mind and heart so that we reveal your glory in and through all we do and say and are. This we pray in your name and in the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

God is light, in him there is no darkness at all.

If we walk in the light, as God is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and are cleansed from all sin.

Hear then, Christ's words of grace to us... "Your sins are forgiven"

Thanks be to God!

AN EARLY WORD

HYMN TiS 675 Lord, the light of your love is shining

BIBLE READINGS:

Mark 9:2-9

2 Corinthians 4:3-6

REFLECTION

There are hinge points in our lives; moments when we know life will never be the same again. Sometimes we know it at the time – on the birth of a child, at weddings, or at a time of loss. Then there are other events that only become clearer as a hinge point in hindsight – the decision-making moment that made for a new life direction, or meeting someone for the first time who turned out to be a significant person in the future.

The story of the transfiguration is a hinge point in the church year. It is the moment where the humanity and divinity of Christ collide, where the mystery and reality of life are held in tension, where the story changes as we move out of Epiphany and into the Lenten journey towards Jerusalem. It is the moment of going up the mountain to places of divine, ethereal encounter and down the mountain to places of reality, suffering and service.

So - as we stand on the edge of our Lenten journey it is crucial that we reflect on that extraordinary moment of Jesus' transfiguration. Following Jesus involves much giving out and sometimes there are not a lot of opportunities to take-in. There are times when we all need that extra assurance and reassurance of God's presence and power - perhaps especially in these coming weeks so that we can participate as fully as possible in a journey that invites us all to self-examination and repentance- that challenges us to walk the way of the cross. And that assurance is present for us in our gospel lesson for today - as it was for Jesus.

Back towards the beginning of our Epiphany journey, we encountered Jesus being baptised in the Jordan. There was a unique event that accompanied this baptism - the descent of the Spirit from heaven and the voice declaring Jesus to be the Son of God. At his baptism, in an atmosphere of prayer, Jesus' ministry and mission was initiated.

Full of the Spirit, Jesus left the waters of his baptism. Between that event, however, and the Transfiguration, Jesus was involved with radical teaching, compassionate healing, miraculous feeding - always, it seems, accompanied by ever growing crowds. All energy-depleting exercises.

Jesus' teaching concerning good news for those who are poor, pardon for those captivated by sin, new ways of seeing in a world unrestricted by legalistic practices, and liberation for those who are oppressed, was teaching that was not and is not always welcome, because it might just upset the status quo. And Jesus did upset and even antagonise his listeners with his challenging and provocative words. Not unusual, but perhaps spiritually depleting. As Jesus moved around the countryside I wonder did he have a growing awareness that what he did, what he said, what he taught, would ultimately lead to his suffering and death?

In verses preceding the account of the Transfiguration we find Jesus asking the disciples who the people thought he was. And of the disciples he asked: Who do you say that I am? Did he need their affirmation to dispel any doubts about what seemed to be shaping up as an inevitable future. Did the prospect of that future, as he verbalised it with his disciples, begin to clutch at him with a sense of uneasiness if not fear?

Jesus shared our humanity, therefore he must have shared our human fears and our human doubts. Wouldn't he need to be assured and reassured - especially reassured that God's power and presence were still an essential part of his being.

So - he went up the mountain to pray.

Jesus' prayers were surely answered in abundance as he received affirmation from God in that glorious mountain-top experience, in the presence of these two great figures from Jewish faith history - Moses and Elijah. They spoke to him about his departure - his death - a new exodus through which people would experience liberation from the power of death and new life in the Spirit. And Jesus' shining outward appearance was surely a manifestation of the strengthening of his Spirit which he received that day- empowering him to set his face towards Jerusalem – and the cross.

And most of this was observed by the three awestruck disciples, who realised that the presence and glory of God were far more real than the grass at their feet and the sky overhead.

There, the human was overshadowed by the divine.

There, Jesus heard the very voice which had commissioned him at his baptism – with similar words “This is my Son, my Beloved...”

And the disciples, when they had recovered from the shock of this close encounter with God, must have had their faith in Jesus confirmed when they too heard the divine voice with the added command “Listen to him”.

We have our faith confirmed also as we listen to Jesus - the source and substance of our faith. The more closely we listen, the more likely we are to reflect God's glory into the world. When we do, lives and situations are transfigured sometimes in ways we would never dream possible.

HYMN TiS 234 How good, Lord, to be here

ANNOUNCEMENTS

OFFERING and Dedication of offering

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS:

Holy God, we encounter you in our daily living for there in our midst you are always present. We bring our prayers for the messiness of our living to you this day. (*Silence*)

For places where beauty is absent and truth is desperately needed, we pray.

For first nations people of this land and all around the world, we pray.
Holy God, call us to ministries of reconciliation. Plant a desire to understand the deep knowledge and wisdom of First Peoples, in the hearts of all people.

For places of heartbreak and pain, where relationships are damaged or damaging, we pray.
Bring compassion and understanding, freedom and peace, healer of hearts.

For places of mysterious encounter with you, we pray. Help us share our stories and the good news of your revelation and presence.

Holy God, call us and renew us, that our hearts and hands may serve you and the world.
Speak to us and through us, that we may be participants in the whole people of God.

We pray in the name of Jesus who taught us to pray, saying:

. Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

HYMN: Christ, be our light

Sending Out:

In the coming week,
may you experience the presence of God with joy.
May the holy cloud comfort you.
May the divine voice encourage you.
May the power of the Spirit transform you,
transform us,
transform our world. **Amen.**

HYMN TiS 782 Go now in peace