

**Church of the Divine Love**

**THE TRANSFIGURATION**

**AUGUST 6, 2023 9:00 AM**

**HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II**

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THE WORD OF GOD

Processional Hymn #

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Psalm 99

Second Lesson: **2 Peter 1:13-21**

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THE HOLY COMMUNION

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Dismissal	

### **Sermon Sunday August 6, 2023**

Exodus 34:29-35; Psalm 99; 2 Peter 1:13-21; Luke 9:28-36.

#### **Sisters and brothers in Christ,**

When have you recently experienced beauty? What are some of your most beautiful experiences? Before you answer let me explain what I am asking. I am not asking when you saw something you thought was beautiful. I am not asking about physical beauty, the outward appearance of people or things. I’m asking about moments and situations in which you experienced and participated in beauty not so much with your eyes or your mind but with your heart. I am talking about those times when the beautiful meets us and we know it intimately, not as an object but as a presence greater than ourselves. We are grasped and enfolded by the beauty and it shapes and forms our lives leaving us forever changed.

The beauty that I am speaking of cannot be defined. It can only be encountered and experienced. It’s more than what our words can describe but is often named by our tears. I’m sure you have all had those times when the beauty of the moment fills your eyes with tears and all you can say is, It’s just so beautiful. I can’t explain what I mean by beauty or how it happens so let me just tell you some of my experiences of beauty. Perhaps that will prompt or help you to recognize and recall some of your own. I hope it does. We are always waking up to the presence of beauty in ourselves, each other, and the

world. How could it be otherwise when one of the divine names, one of the names for God, is The Beautiful One? Why wouldn't The Beautiful One make himself known through and regularly invite us to participate in beauty? Holy Scripture tells us that the Creator looked at all creation and declared it to be "very good," but did you know that the Hebrew word translated as good also means beautiful? What does it say about us that we have been created in the image and likeness of The Beautiful One?

Here's what I think all this means. We have been created with an eye for beauty. We are to live with an eye for beauty. We are to see ourselves and one another with an eye for beauty. An eye for beauty opens us to the transfiguring presence of God in every human being, in our lives, and in our world. Beauty connects us to our truest and most authentic self and it is available to all who keep awake. So, what are your stories of beauty? When have you known and participated in that presence that can only be described as beautiful? Tell me what happened, where you were, who was there. When has the beauty of the liturgy, a piece of music, poetry, a conversation brought tears to your eyes? Recall a time when beauty wrapped itself around you and all you could think was, I never want this moment to end. The experience of beauty ranges from the most profound and intimate experiences to those fits of holy laughter that leave you with a belly ache and streams of tears. What are your experiences of beauty? Where have you encountered beauty this past week? Whatever your encounters are, they are an encounter with the divine presence, experiences of the Light of God illumining your life, experiences through which your life was transformed and forever changed. They are your experiences of transfiguration, moments and situations in which you had an eye for beauty.

Isn't that what happened to Peter, John, and James? They kept awake and they saw Christ's glory. They had an eye for beauty. They awoke to the beauty that had always been before them. The beauty wasn't new, their seeing was. Luke doesn't offer any explanations or speculation about how this happened, only that it did. Neither do Peter, John, or James offer an explanation. They kept silent and, in those days, told no one of any of the things they had seen. I think there is some wisdom for us in the silence of Peter, John, and James. The transfiguration is one of those big stories, mountaintop stories, that can begin to seem a bit too fantastic, unreal, and distant from us. Often, we take those kinds of stories and either look for some rational explanation or we make it a supernatural event about Jesus that could never happen in the flatlands of our lives. Either way we close our eyes and fall asleep to the beauty of God that is in and all around us. Their silence, however, asks us to just let the story be the story. It doesn't need to be explained, it needs to be experienced. It doesn't need to be understood, it needs to be lived. When we let the story be the story, we create room for it to become our story. We let it live in us. And the story of the transfiguration in today's gospel is the story of the sublime, absolute beauty.

While Luke does not explain the transfiguration, neither will he let us be naive about it. I think that's why in his account of the gospel the story of the demon possessed boy (Luke 9:37-43) immediately follows the story of the transfiguration. Luke is holding before us a truth and a reality about the world and ourselves. Transfiguration and disfiguration stand side by side. They do in each one of us, in our world, and in Luke's gospel. Transfiguration, Beauty, Luke 9:28-43, Luke 9:28-36, Luke 9:37-43 "On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain," a man brought his demon possessed son to Jesus. He

told Jesus that the demon mauls his son and the boy shrieks, convulses, and foams at the mouth. It's an ugly scene. The boy's life has been distorted and disfigured. He has been separated from the original beauty of his creation. He has lost touch with his truest and most authentic self. He's not himself. It's a story of disfiguration. I've known times like that as well and I'll bet you have too. They are those times when we look at ourselves and our life and we don't like what we see or what we have become. It's ugly. I'm not talking about our outward and physical appearance. This ugliness, like beauty, is an interior condition. In those times we are recognizing that our life has become deformed and disfigured. We might even say things like, I'm just not myself; That's not me; How did my life get to this point? I don't know what came over me. That's not who I am. What we are really saying is that we've lost the connection with the original beauty of our creation.

The beauty, however, has not and cannot be lost. It doesn't matter who you are, what you've done, or what your life is like the beauty cannot be lost. Human life and the world have already been transfigured. That's what Jesus knows and demonstrates with his healing of the boy. Jesus always sees with an eye for beauty. He refuses to let the manifestation of ugliness turn him away. Even within the distorted and disfigured life of the boy Jesus sees beauty. He calls forth and opens himself to the boy's beauty he knows has always been there. With an eye for beauty Jesus heals and returns the boy to his father. That's the power of beauty to change our life and return us to ourselves. That's The Beautiful One healing, restoring, and making whole. That's the transfiguration in the flatlands of life.

I don't want to fall asleep to the beauty and I don't think you do either. I want to look in the mirror before I go to bed and see beauty. I want to wrap my arms around you and stand together in the beauty. I want to call forth your beauty and I want you to do the same for me. I want to look at the disfigured, broken, and hurting places of our lives and world trusting that beauty is present. Let's keep awake. Let's live and see with an eye for beauty. Let's leave here today knowing that regardless of where we go, what happens, or who we meet Beauty awaits us. Beauty awaits. The whole of creation participates in the glory of God. Humanity alone, however, is called to the Mount of Transfiguration. It is there that Christ reveals who we are and who, by grace, we are to become. The Feast of the Transfiguration invites us to wipe the sleep from our eyes, behold what we are, and become what we see. **Amen!**

THE TRANSFIGURATION	9:00 AM	HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II	(also on zoom)
MONDAY	8:30 PM	AA MEETING	
WEDNESDAY	7:00 PM	AL-ANON MEETING	
THURSDAY	10AM-2PM	THRIFT SHOP	
	8:30 PM	AA MEETING	
SATURDAY	10AM-2PM	THRIFT SHOP	

11 PENTECOST

9:00 AM

HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

(also on zoom)

### PARISH PRAYER LIST

Loving God, comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind or spirit. Give them courage and hope in their troubles and bring them the joy of your salvation. Especially we remember before you:

Grace Schinella	Lourdes S.	Kaylee
Bob Curley	Arlene Goodenough	Art
Chris Dickson	Kate Jones	Deb P.
Michael Echevarria	John Rocco	Bethany
Michael & Family	Warren	Dennis
Charlotte H.	Bernie Walther	Anthony
Mo (Rachael)	Phil Ryder	Carolyn
Anthony Paribello	Barbara Curran	Del
Robert Hosey	Robert Sweat	Aidan
Sally & Roger	Sophia	Carol K.
Mary & Family	Christopher	Amy
Nathan Treadwell	Vincent	Judy
Joan Blan	Celeste	Ciara
Margaret C. and Baby		

All people and countries suffering from violence and hatred.

Help us speak words of encouragement and offer deeds of kindness to them. Bring us with them, into the unending joy of your kingdom. Amen

### Prayer before Worship

Almighty God, who pours out on all who desire it, the spirit of grace. Deliver us, when we draw near to you, from coldness of heart and wanderings of mind, that with steadfast thoughts and kindled affections we may worship you in spirit and in truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Hymn to be sung during the consecration:

Father I adore you,  
Lay my life before you,  
How I love you.

Repeat twice with second verse starting with Jesus  
and third verse starting with Spirit.

### Prayer for Peace

Eternal God, in whose perfect kingdom no sword is drawn but the sword of righteousness, no strength known but the strength of love: So mightily spread abroad your Spirit, that all peoples may be gathered under the banner of the Prince of Peace, as children of one Father; to whom be dominions and glory, now and for ever. Amen

