

February 26, 2017

Transfiguration Sunday

2 Peter 1: 16-21 A Comment about the Morning Star

Christ the Morning Star relates to the HOPE of manifesting **God's New Day** in our midst. When the planet Venus rises, it means the sun will follow very soon creating a new morning, usually within an hour or two, sometimes in just a matter of minutes.

Christ's coming—in a broad sense his resurrection means **God's** light is about to shine forever on the universe, making all wrongs right, wiping away all tears, and ushering in the new heaven and new earth.

On a long dark night, the appearance of the morning star means daybreak is imminent. In the long dark night of suffering on earth, the Risen One being seen as the morning star means the eternal morning is about to dawn.

Hence, Christ as the morning star is a picture of great promise and hope.

Matthew 17: 1-9

Transfiguration Sunday – Thin places, mountaintop experiences, glimpses of **Glor**y, the glow of compassion and the radiance of love; the dazzling light of **God's** presence shining through. We glow inside and out.

Transfiguration Sunday: reflecting the **glory of God's** uncontrolling love.

Over the years, we have experienced glimpses of **glory** through our faith community. We have shared sacred times, turning points, clarifications, profound connections, amazing affirmations, moments of trust, forgiveness and acceptance.

What is important today is that these experiences need not be as rare as our gospel lesson might seem to suggest. Transformational moments don't just happen to us like spectators invited to a playoff game. But I'm getting a head of myself.

After that first Easter everything changed. **Jesus** had directed his disciples to say nothing until he was raised. After the resurrection the disciples were no longer just spectators in the stands.

I think we forget this! With the gift of the **Holy Spirit** the disciples became players on the field. With the gift of the same Spirit so do we. The Spirit that transfigured **Jesus** is alive and well and available to shine through us today.

This is what Leonard Cohen was getting at when he wrote *“There is a crack in everything, that’s how the light gets in”*. Now I don’t think Cohen was suggesting that Christians are all crackpots or bigger crackpots than most. The good news is we can actually drive the process of letting the light in. We have the choice, the opportunity to embody, to become the transfiguring moments.

You may remember that on a Monday evening almost four weeks ago, Vicki and I gathered with what turned out to be over 200 people, at one of many vigils held in Quebec and across the country.

We met at the Dorval Mosque, the one we at Mountainside have been working with to support the settlement of Syrian refugees.

We were all still in shock at the killing of 6 Muslim men, and the wounding of 19 more, in Quebec City as they peacefully prayed the evening before. We gathered that evening to offer our condolences and stand in solidarity with them.

Imagine if this had happened to us while we were worshipping that Sunday. Two thirds of our gathered community would have been killed or wounded.

So, there we were a small group at 6 pm, out in the cold, stamping our feet to keep warm, standing in the dark, in the Dorval Mosque parking lot. Unexpectedly, Mehmet Deger the president of the mosque came out and invited us inside. He and his wife welcomed each one of us.

But it took over half an hour for all of us to enter because people kept arriving. The chairs filled up, the floor filled up, and standing room filled up and right out into the stairway.

Then those who were moved to speak, Muslim and Christian, spoke from the heart. We sang a raging granny piece **“Oh Fearful Ones”** and the speeches continued. The media was there and recorded our witness.

That Monday night, Vicki and I were deeply moved by the experience of empathy, compassion, solidarity, and commitment to care for and protect a very different faith community. We were different but we discovered we were also deeply connected. Vicki and I felt that connection in a profoundly physical and spiritual way that joined heart and head together. It intensified our humanity causing a profound sense of connection and solidarity with this Muslim faith community, and those like us, who were there to support and protect them.

Now I must confess that when all the social justice talk of solidarity was all the rage a few decades ago I was a skeptic. It was one thing to support a cause here or there. It was a whole different thing for the Polish trade union movement to stand up against the power of the Russian Bear. In my mind only life and death struggles qualified for honest to goodness acts of solidarity. Well I felt that real experience of solidarity that night.

And there was more. As people shared from the heart, faces began to *glow*. Folk became *radiant*, and the room just *lit* up.

There in that Mosque we reflected the glory of uncontrollable love. But we also became uncontrollable love for one another and Quebecers at large.

Together we *shone* with such beauty and I thought *“how wonderful for the children who are here sharing in the Spirit that lights up our lives for one another.”*

We were as public as a *“city on a hill”*. It was a mountain top experience becoming the *light* of **Divine Unity** for one another, sharing the shimmer of solidarity, the glow of uncontrollable love.

We were a mountaintop experience, Christians, Muslims, Jews and no faith at all, and we were transfigured together.

As our Epistle reading suggests we were *“like a lamp shining in a dark place until the Day dawns and the light of the morning star shines in all our hearts”*.

So let me tell again a story from the Hasidic tradition which reflects this same truth. It is a story of the Rabbi, who was asked one day by a student,

“How can one tell when the new day has come?”

The Rabbi reversed the question and asked his student,

“You tell me how you can know.”

The student guessed,

“is it when the rooster crows to signal a new dawn?”

“No,” the Rabbi answered.

“Is it then perhaps when one can discern the silhouette of a tree against the sky?”

“No,” he was told.

“The surest way to know when the night is over

and when a new day has come

is when you can look into the face of a stranger,

the one who is so different from you,

and recognize him as your brother. See her as your sister.

Until that day comes, it will always be night.”

Thin places, mountaintop experiences, glimpses of **Glory**, the glow of compassion, the shimmer of solidarity and the radiance of love; the dazzling light of **God’s** presence shining through. At the Dorval Mosque we glowed inside and out.

Application for Today

Friends, the world needs our shining light, the shimmer of solidarity, the shared glow of uncontrolling love ***until the New Day dawns and the light of the morning star shines in all our hearts.***

Meditation

Follow your breathing inward to that prayerful place.

Feel your feet grounding to the earth, connecting to all creation.

Open your heart to the Mystery in the midst of life.

Relax into God.

Allow the light and love of God's presence

to begin to flow into your open heart.

Sense the warmth.

See the glow.

Feel your body filling up. Overflowing. Shining forth.

Now share this light and love with those around you.

All mixing, connecting, glowing and radiant.

Transfiguration.

Think of a relationship that has been heavy on your mind.

Sent the over flowing love and shining radiant light into it.

Be open to the transformation of all involved.

Transfiguration.

Now think of a situation in our world where lives are at risk.

Over flow and shine forth into this desperate place.

Be open to the transformation of all involved.

Transfiguration.

Now remember the environment under siege.

Over flow and shine forth into all creation.

Notice there is always enough light and love

when we connect with God and one another.

Transfiguration.

Now let us pray together as Jesus taught us saying...