

May the words of my mouth, & the meditations of all our hearts, be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our strength & our redeemer. Amen.

On Wednesday morning, many of us awoke to news that pressed hard upon the soul. The trauma that unfolded in Tumbler Ridge did not remain at a distance; it reached through screens & headlines & settled into our chests. We can scarcely imagine how that community has been changed, how ordinary streets now feel so different to the people there.

There are weeks when the world feels heavier than usual. Weeks when sorrow seems to gather strength. And it is precisely in such a week that the Church brings us up a mountain.

On this Last Sunday after the Epiphany, we stand with Peter, James, & John as Jesus is transfigured before them. Jesus' face shines. His clothes blaze with light. Moses & Elijah stand beside him, the law & the prophets bearing witness while God's voice breaks through the cloud: "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him."

It is a breathtaking scene. But the Church does not give it to us today merely so that we may marvel. That is what we do on August 6th, when we celebrate the

Feast of the Transfiguration. Today, the vision serves another purpose.

Today, standing at the edge of Lent, this flash of glory steadies our steps for the road ahead.

Notice where this happens. Not at the end of the story. Not after the resurrection. It happens on the way to Jerusalem. On the way to betrayal. On the way to the cross.

The light appears before the darkness deepens.

Peter, overcome by wonder, wants to build tents. He wants to hold the moment still. Who would not? When the veil lifts & we glimpse something radiant & sure, we want to stay there. We want faith to feel like that always — clear, unmistakable, triumphant.

But Jesus does not remain on the mountain. He comes down.

He comes down to face the arguments & the illnesses, to walk amidst those living in fear & frailty. He comes down into a world that will wound him. *The glory revealed on the mountain is not an escape from suffering; it is the truth that will carry him through it.*

The Transfiguration is Easter breaking in ahead of time.

It is the Church's way of saying: when you see our Lord arrested, mocked, & crucified — do not think that the light has gone out. We may not see it in times of deep darkness, but the light we have been given will never be extinguished.

We know valleys. We know hospital rooms that feel sterile & cold. We know relationships strained thin by years of neglect & abuse. We know the dull ache of grief & the sharp sting of tragedy. We know what it is to wonder where God is when the world seems to be spiralling apart.

And yet, in this story, we are shown what is most true.

What is most true about Jesus is not the humiliation of the cross alone, but the resurrection that the cross cannot prevent. And what is most true about you is not your fear, not your failure, not even your mortality — but your life hidden with Christ in God.

This week, we watched Buddhist monks enter the Washington National Cathedral, their quiet presence a witness to peace in a violent world. No grand pronouncements — just prayer, just presence. A reminder that even when the world is being shaken,

there are those who continue to reach towards something deeper & enduring.

And so, we bring with us the grief of Tumbler Ridge. We bring our private sorrows & our public anxieties. We do so trusting that this wounded world is still held in the hand & in the heart of God. Confident that, even now. Even here. Even in places marked by tragedy, this world is still full of God's glory.

As we begin Lent this week, we do not walk into it to earn God's love. We do not fast or pray to make ourselves acceptable to God. We walk into Lent already claimed by the voice that spoke on the mountain.

“This is my Son, my Beloved.”

In Christ, that word has been spoken over you.

On Ash Wednesday, the sign of the cross will be made with ashes upon our foreheads. And the ashes will tell the truth: we are dust. Mortal.

But rest assured: they do not tell the whole truth. The truth glimpsed on the mountain — the promise that, however dusty our lives can be, we are destined for glory. The trust that the frail, trembling creatures we

are will one day shine with the borrowed brilliance of Christ's own risen life.

Peter did not understand that yet. It took Easter morning to rouse him from his mortal sleep, seeing the tomb empty, & the light that was stronger than death.

And so the Church, in her wisdom, gives us this vision before we descend into Lent. A tender mercy, reassuring us of our destination. A durable lamp, guiding our way.

And so, *remember that you are walking toward Easter:*
You are walking toward life —
a life that has already begun in you,
even if it is not yet visible to your own eyes.

So listen to the Lord...
when he calls you to repentance,
when he speaks forgiveness,
when he says, "Do not be afraid."

The light on the mountain is not a passing spectacle. It is a promise, a direction, a future — *for you*. Thanks be to God. Amen.