

Last Sunday after the Epiphany Sunday Transfiguration Sunday, March 03, 2019

The Collect: O God, who before the passion of your only-begotten Son revealed his glory upon the holy mountain: Grant to us that we, beholding by faith the light of his countenance, may be strengthened to bear our cross, and be changed into his likeness from glory to glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Old Testament: Exodus 34:29-35 read from The Message Bible

29-30 When Moses came down from Mount Sinai carrying the two Tablets of The Testimony, he didn't know that the skin of his face glowed because he had been speaking with God. Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, saw his radiant face, and held back, afraid to get close to him.

31-32 Moses called out to them. Aaron and the leaders in the community came back and Moses talked with them. Later all the Israelites came up to him and he passed on the commands, everything that God had told him on Mount Sinai.

33-35 When Moses finished speaking with them, he put a veil over his face, but when he went into the presence of God to speak with him, he removed the veil until he came out. When he came out and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, they would see Moses' face, its skin glowing, and then he would again put the veil on his face until he went back in to speak with God.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 99 read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer

1 The Lord is King;

let the people tremble; *

he is enthroned upon the cherubim;

let the earth shake.

- 2 The Lord is great in Zion; *
he is high above all peoples.
- 3 Let them confess his Name, which is great and awesome; *
he is the Holy One.
- 4 “O mighty King, lover of justice,
you have established equity; *
you have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob.”
- 5 Proclaim the greatness of the Lord our God
and fall down before his footstool; *
he is the Holy One.
- 6 Moses and Aaron among his priests,
and Samuel among those who call upon his Name, *
they called upon the Lord, and he answered them.
- 7 He spoke to them out of the pillar of cloud; *
they kept his testimonies and the decree that he gave them.
- 8 “O Lord our God, you answered them indeed; *
you were a God who forgave them,
yet punished them for their evil deeds.”
- 9 Proclaim the greatness of the Lord our God
and worship him upon his holy hill; *
for the Lord our God is the Holy One.

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 3:12-18 4:1-2 read from the Modern English Version Bible

12 Seeing then that we have such hope, we speak with great boldness, 13 not as Moses, who put a veil over his face, so that the children of Israel could not look intently at the end of what was fading away. 14 Instead, their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the old covenant, the veil which was done away with in Christ. 15 But even to this day, when Moses is read, the veil is in their hearts. 16 Nevertheless when anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit. And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 18 But we all, seeing the glory of the Lord with unveiled faces, as in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image

from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord.

Therefore, since we have this ministry through the mercy we have received, we do not lose heart. 2 But we have renounced the secret things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by expressing the truth and commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

The Word of the Lord

Gospel: Luke 9:28-43a read from The New American Standard Bible

28 Some eight days after these sayings, He took along Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. 29 And while He was praying, the appearance of His face became different, and His clothing became white and gleaming. 30 And behold, two men were talking with Him; and they were Moses and Elijah, 31 who, appearing in glory, were speaking of His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. 32 Now Peter and his companions had been overcome with sleep; but when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men standing with Him. 33 And as these were leaving Him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles: one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah"—not realizing what he was saying. 34 While he was saying this, a cloud formed and began to overshadow them; and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. 35 Then a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him!" 36 And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent, and reported to no one in those days any of the things which they had seen.

37 On the next day, when they came down from the mountain, a large crowd met Him. 38 And a man from the crowd shouted, saying, "Teacher, I beg You to look at my son, for he is my only boy, 39 and a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly screams, and it throws him into a convulsion with foaming at the mouth; and only with difficulty does it leave him, mauling him as it leaves. 40 I begged Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not." 41 And Jesus answered and said, "You unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you and put up with you? Bring your son here." 42 While he was still approaching, the

demon slammed him to the ground and threw him into a convulsion. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the boy and gave him back to his father. 43 And they were all amazed at the greatness of God.

The Gospel of the Lord

The Closing Prayer: On March 7 we remember Perpetua, Felicity and their Companions, Martyrs at Carthage. Read from *A Great Cloud of Witnesses*.

Vibia Perpetua, born in 181, was a young widow, mother of an infant, and owner of several slaves, including Felicitas and Revocatus. With two other young Carthaginians, Secundulus and Saturninus, they were catechumens preparing for baptism.

Early in the third century, Emperor Septimius Severus decreed that all persons should sacrifice to the divinity of the emperor. There was no way that a Christian, confessing faith in the one Lord Jesus Christ, could do this. Perpetua and her companions were arrested and held in prison under miserable conditions.

In a document attributed to Perpetua, we learn of visions she had in prison. One was a ladder to heaven, which she climbed to reach a large garden; another was her brother who had died when young of a dreadful disease, but was now well and drinking the water of life; the last was of herself as a warrior battling the Devil and defeating him to win entrance to the gate of life. "And I awoke, understanding that I should fight, not with beasts, but with the Devil...So much about me up to the day before the games; let him who will write of what happened then."

At the public hearing before the Proconsul, she refused even the entreaties of her aged father, saying, "I am a Christian."

On March 7, 203, Perpetua and her companions, encouraging one another to bear bravely whatever pain they might suffer, were sent to the arena to be mangled by a leopard, a boar, a bear, and a savage cow. Perpetua and Felicitas, tossed by the cow, were bruised and disheveled, but Perpetua, "lost in spirit and ecstasy," hardly knew that anything had

happened. To her companions she cried, "Stand fast in the faith and love one another. And do not let what we suffer be a stumbling block to you."

Eventually, all were put to death by a stroke of a sword through the throat. The soldier who struck Perpetua was inept. His first blow merely pierced her throat between the bones. She shrieked with pain, then aided the man to guide the sword properly. The report of her death concludes, "Perhaps so great a woman, feared by the unclean spirit, could not have been killed unless she so willed it."

Let us pray: O God, the King of Saints, who strengthened your servants Perpetua, Felicity, and their companions to make a good confession and encourage one another in the time of trial: Grant that we who cherish their blessed memory may share their pure and steadfast faith and win with them the palm of victory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**