

READINGS & REFLECTION

Feast of the Transfiguration

6 August 2023

Collect

Father in heaven,
whose Son Jesus Christ was wonderfully transfigured
before chosen witnesses upon the holy mountain,
and spoke of the exodus he would accomplish at Jerusalem:
give us strength so to hear his voice and bear our cross
that in the world to come we may see him as he is;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Psalm 97

- 1 The Lord is king: let the earth rejoice; ♦
let the multitude of the isles be glad.
- 2 Clouds and darkness are round about him; ♦
righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne.
- 3 Fire goes before him ♦
and burns up his enemies on every side.
- 4 His lightnings lit up the world; ♦
the earth saw it and trembled.
- 5 The mountains melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, ♦
at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.
- 6 The heavens declared his righteousness, ♦
and all the peoples have seen his glory.
- 7 Confounded be all who worship carved images and delight in mere idols. ♦
Bow down before him, all you gods.
- 8 Zion heard and was glad, and the daughters of Judah rejoiced, ♦
because of your judgements, O Lord.
- 9 For you, Lord, are most high over all the earth; ♦
you are exalted far above all gods.
- 10 The Lord loves those who hate evil; ♦
he preserves the lives of his faithful and delivers them from the hand of the wicked.
- 11 Light has sprung up for the righteous ♦
and joy for the true of heart.
- 12 Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous, ♦
and give thanks to his holy name.

A reading from the second letter of Peter, Chapter 1, verses 16 to 19

For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honour and glory from God the Father when that voice was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory, saying, 'This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.' We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven, while we were with him on the holy mountain.

So we have the prophetic message more fully confirmed. You will do well to be attentive to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

Acclamation

Alleluia, **alleluia**

This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!

Alleluia.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke, Chapter 9, verses 26 to 38.

Glory to you, O Lord

Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, 'Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah'—not knowing what he said. While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. Then from the cloud came a voice that said, 'This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!' When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Reflection from Peter

If I had the choice of seeing either Barbie or Oppenheimer I should undoubtedly choose the latter. That may well be prejudice on my part, and I should perhaps make an effort to see both, but Oppenheimer holds a very particular interest for me. Today we celebrate the great feast of the Transfiguration: a moment when, suddenly, the chosen few disciples could see Jesus for who he truly was. All veils were stripped away. Reality, unadorned, broke through. And the Gospels tell us of this moment in terms of light – Jesus' clothes became dazzling white. A sudden eruption of light revealed the truth.

This day, August 6th, is also the day we remember the terrible destruction wrought in Hiroshima by the dropping of the atomic bomb – Robert Oppenheimer's miraculous creation. It too produced light, but deadly light that heralded destruction that went on wreaking havoc for generations.

If nothing else, we are reminded that light and darkness are not simply aligned with good and evil. Light can be as powerful a negative force as darkness. It is clear that Oppenheimer was troubled by the implications of what he had achieved. He wrestled long and hard with his conscience, but it was not his decision that caused so much death. Others took the decision to drop the bomb. As we face the increasing danger of nuclear warfare in Ukraine we need to do all we can to pray and act so that it does not happen. But, God forbid, should it happen, God will still be God: the one who alone can bring life out of death.