



Borders Mission Circuit

Part of the Methodist Church of Great Britain



The **Methodist** Church 

Ministers Weekly message for 14th February – Mark 9: 2-9

Dear Friends in the Borders Mission Circuit **Being a Transformative presence?**

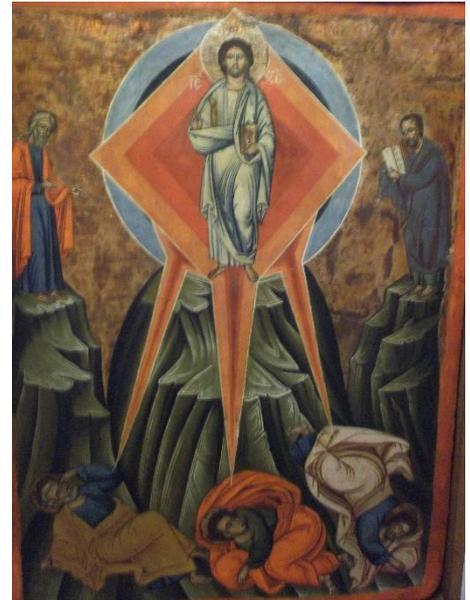
Transfiguration and Transformative moments.

Well as the rest of the world celebrates Saint Valentine's Day (Note - His feast day is celebrated more outside the church than within) Pete and I are celebrating with...reading glasses! The time has come, for us both, to give in and get reading glasses. We blame Zoom! For me (Sam) I hope to *see more clearly!* and of course to "*know God more clearly*" as the prayer says! For me (Pete) another 'Transfiguration' moment (or an Epiphany) and a lockdown joy of this past year has been having the time to walk around more, getting to know the area, particularly discovering the short cuts, routes and small interconnecting roads around Sutton in Ashfield.

You may have heard or read about 'liminal moments', in the Christian journey these can be when former ways of being cease and we move forwards to new discoveries and possibilities. Liminal spaces, places where we encounter God, Jesus, the Spirit, where we get a taste of the eschatological (end times, return of the Messiah) hope. In today's Gospel reading, Peter, James & John on a mountain have a liminal moment, seeing Jesus transfigured. Liminal spaces in our lives may not be an experience of "bright light..chariots of fire.. whirlwinds" (such as we read in today's OT passage, 2 Kings 2), but the places in our lives where we experience the touch of the divine. It may be a moment when you are engaged in an activity deemed spiritual or religious, such as reading Scripture or receiving Holy Communion. It may be an encounter in nature when you are touched by the beauty of God's creation, which shouts his glory. Or the moment may be more intimate or personal when you are overwhelmed by God's love reflected in your love for a partner or a child. These are the moments when you have an awareness of the Divine.

Liminal spaces, by definition are not irrational, but *suprarational* spaces that enable a transformation which is not only supranatural but also supra-rational – not against reason, but *beyond* reason. We agree with a commentator on this topic, that the Biblical word for

supra-rational is Faith. If we seek a reasonable explanation for the experience of liminal spaces without faith, then like Elijah's disciples, we will be searching in the wilderness for many days. The paradox of the post-secular age we live in is the decreasing number of people professing a faith, yet an increasing number of people claiming an interest in spirituality. Yet Spirituality without faith is wandering in the wilderness, looking for that which cannot be found.



On the other hand, these liminal spaces/moments of touching the Divine, when understood with faith as times when we are reoriented to and affirmed in our status as a child of God, remind us of our calling to work for the expansion of His kingdom. These liminal spaces are not a place to hide comfortably away (with a “holy huddle, bless me, bless me” stance) from our duty of bringing the Good News. These life-changing moments, are, as Paul reminds us in the epistle reading today (2 Corinthians 4) not only God-oriented but God-initiated, enabling us to reflect the glory of God's face.

So back to the 14th February, we have no record of what liminal spaces St Valentines encountered. Various narratives speak of an ordinary man transformed by an encounter with God, that affirmed his faith so deeply that he was ready to give his life for what he believed in. But if we are rationalising, recognise and cherish our encounters with God in our liminal spaces, we too can be transformed and be a transformative presence.

A Prayer: Lord Jesus, raise our expectations of what it means to encounter God not just in this place but in every moment and place, in all places we shall be in the days ahead. Help us every day to discover something new about God's ways, about what God wants of us and change the way we see the world as God sees it, and then the way we act. Amen.

Rev Pete & Deacon Sam, on behalf of Rev Robert, Rev Ann and Rev Nicola.

Picture above is an Icon of The Transfiguration in The Orthodox Cathedral, Sofia, Bulgaria.