



St. Alban's Episcopal Church  
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August 4, 2020

Dear Friends,

Thursday, August 6 the Church celebrates the Feast of The Transfiguration of our Lord. The event is first told in the Gospel of Mark 9:2-8:

“Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. Then Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!" Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.”

“Six days later” the lesson begins - what happened six days ago?

“Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" And they answered him, 'John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.' He asked them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Peter answered him, 'You are the Messiah.' And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him. Then Jesus began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.'”

It's important to know what happened six days before the Transfiguration because the first event is directly related to the second event. First, the Transfiguration is meant for Jesus. The change in his appearance is an assurance that after the terrible events in Jerusalem he will indeed return to his former glory as the Son of God. He likely speaks with Moses and Elijah about both what he is to do when he enters Jerusalem and also the trial and crucifixion that will be the result of his actions.

The Transfiguration also is for the three disciples. Jesus has just told his disciples that Yes, he is the Messiah. But then he follows that information up with what will happen to him when they reach Jerusalem - the rejection and great suffering. Peter refuses to hear such unexpected news. Crucifixion and death don't await Jesus! He is the Messiah, and the long-awaited Messiah will be king!, not an executed felon. And so Peter rebukes Jesus for spouting such nonsense.

Jesus, in turn, rebukes Peter in the strongest possible words when he tells him, “Get behind me Satan!” The last thing Jesus needs is Peter, the leader of the 12 disciples, trying to talk him out of the mission God has appointed to him. When he reaches Jerusalem he will enter it as a king, riding a donkey with the crowd spreading branches of palms along his path. The next day he will disrupt the Temple to cleanse it right before the sacred day of Passover, as thousands of faithful Jews are gathering in Jerusalem to celebrate the feast day. He will teach the crowds in the Temple and be questioned by Pharisees, Sadducees and King Herod’s supporters, astonishing all with his knowledge and teaching. And Jesus will do all these things while Pontius Pilate is in town to prevent any riots or uprisings against the Romans occupation.

It was not foreordained by God that Jesus be crucified, though it was foreseen. It was foreordained by sinful human nature that Jesus be crucified. Jesus’ bold actions will provoke the authorities and they will respond by getting rid of him instead of listening to him. How predictable. Jesus probably discussed all this with Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration. God called him, Jesus said Yes to God, and now the events were set to unfold. No, there would be no glorious revolution in Jerusalem led by Jesus and the twelve, as they expected Jesus to do. God had something far better planned. Out of the evil of Jesus’ crucifixion God brings light and life to all humanity. Jesus knows this, and so he tells Peter to shut up, and God’s voice from heaven tells Peter to “Listen to him.”

What happens when we discover that our dreams of glory are not God’s dreams? Twenty years ago I was the Rector of a parish that had grown to have 50 people at the first service and 100 at the second, with year round Christian education for all ages. Our second son had just been born and his adoption finalized. I loved my life and dreamed of the next 10-15 years at that church. Then my life fell apart when the undiagnosed, episodic fibromyalgia became chronic and I no longer could work full time. My dream had died. But God had a different dream, a different purpose for my life that I never would have discovered if I was strong enough to work fulltime. My 14 years at St. Alban’s have been a blessed part of my new dream. God called me to be a priest at the age of 12, and I rejoice in our worship, life and ministry together. God also called me from an even earlier age to be a mother. Had I continued to work six days a week I could not have given the time and care to the two boys God chose me and Brian to parent as our own. Tending to Russell’s educational needs and Chris’ medical needs was a second call from God, who “makes the woman of a childless house to be a joyful mother of children.” (Psalm 113:8)

Peter had to let his dream of being the right hand man of the Messiah-King go. He couldn’t. When Jesus was arrested Peter denied knowing him three times. It takes time to let dreams die and Peter was terrified, and rightly so, of being crucified alongside Jesus. Thanks be to God, Peter embraced God’s dream and gave himself heart, body, and soul to proclaiming his Risen Lord, braving beatings and jail and ultimately, crucifixion.

Are you following Jesus or a messiah of your own making? God has a plan for the rest of your life. We follow a crucified Lord, so it won’t be without hardship. We also follow a Risen Lord. May the power of God be with you, the warmth of Jesus’ love enfold you, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit lead you to true life and peace.

God bless you,  
Mother Julie+



Honoring Retiring Organist Della Holtzapple  
Car Parade leaves the church on Sunday, August 9 at Noon. Join us!

### **Sunday Morning Schedule**

8:30 a.m. Bible Study in the Fellowship Room and also on Zoom

9:30 a.m. In-person Holy Eucharist (no singing or exchanging the peace) - 15 people maximum  
6-9 people have participated to date. There is room for you!

10:30 a.m. Zoom service led from my office

**Zoom Code and Password for Bible Study at 8:30 a.m. - 817 9328 0104 and 400978**

**Zoom Code and Password for Worship at 10:30 a.m. - 870 3167 4090 and 923019**

**Zoom Code for Tuesday Morning Prayer at 10:00 a.m. - 868 3084 1089 and 114552**

**Use your telephone for Zoom on Sunday at 10:30 a.m. Bible Study Sunday at 8:30 a.m.**

Dial 1-646-558-8656

When prompted Enter 87031674090#

When prompted Enter#

When prompted Enter 923019#

That will put you in Zoom's waiting room  
and I will let you in.

Dial 1-646-558-8656

When prompted Enter 817 9328 0104#

When prompted Enter#

When prompted Enter 400978#

That will put you in Zoom's waiting  
room and I will let you in.

### **Thursday Evening Zoom Class**

The class will not meet this week as Mother Julie will be at Grace, Waverly on diocesan business. On August 13 the class on Original Sin will continue as we go through the 39 Articles at the back of The Book of Common Prayer.

Zoom Code and Password - 858 6751 9278 and 211036

### **Saturday Book Group**

We will meet from 10-11 a.m. on August 8 and 22 and September 12 and 26 to discuss Isabel Wilkerson's book, The Warmth of Other Suns. Read pages 1-122 for August 8.

Zoom Code and Password - 851 7261 1587 and 115401