



Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord

[Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time superseded]

† Sunday 6th August 2017

In England and Wales Cycle of Prayer:

Those who suffer persecution and denial of human rights

Keynote: The reign of God has begun and Christ will come again

Prophet Daniel 7: 9-10, 13-14

Daniel proclaims his vision of how a series of cruel rulers will be finally replaced by the coming of the messianic king, he says: *'As I watched: thrones were set in place and one of great age took his seat. His robe was white as snow, the hair of his head as pure as wool...'* In language that is full of ancient imagery and at once terrifying and awesome Daniel tells us, *'I gazed into the visions of the night. I saw coming on the clouds of heaven, one like the son of man... on him was conferred sovereignty, glory and kingship... which shall never pass away.'* This 'son of man' – the one in human form, contrasts with the 'beasts' of earlier visions, for this new vision is of the one who will establish the kingdom and reign of God. *'...and all people, nations and languages become his servants... His sovereignty is an eternal sovereignty which will never pass away.'*

Responsorial Psalm 96 (97): 1-2, 5-6, 9 – All earth and creation sings rejoicing in its king

Second Letter of Peter 1: 16-19

The apostle Peter offers his personal testimony as a witness that Christ will come in glory at the end of time. *'It was not any cleverly invented myths that we were repeating when we brought you the knowledge of the power and the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; we have seen his majesty for ourselves.'* Recalling the event on Mount Tabor, Peter continues: *'He was honoured and glorified by God the Father... (who) spoke to him and said: "This is my Son, the Beloved; he enjoys my favour." We heard this ourselves, spoken from heaven, when we were with him on the mountain. So we have confirmation of what was said in prophecies... lighting a way through the dark until dawn comes and the morning star rises in your minds.'*

Gospel according to Matthew 17: 1-9

Somehow this event makes the horror of Jesus' passion and death almost bearable for the true identity of Jesus is revealed in this event. *'Jesus took with him Peter and James and John and led them up a high mountain where they could be alone by themselves. There, in their presence he was transfigured... "It is wonderful for us to be here!"* cries Peter. There is a sense of awe, of wonder – even fear of God on this mountainside. But at the same time for these privileged disciples there is a sense of intimacy with God. *'They were so frightened – a cloud came covering them in shadow, and there came a voice from the cloud: "This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him." 'Then suddenly',* the evangelist tells us, *'when they looked round, they saw no one with them any more but only Jesus.'* We are brought back to the hard rock of the mountain and like the three disciples we look to Jesus and continue with him on the journey of faith. With the apostle Peter we can say: *'It is wonderful for us to be here!'*

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