



BREAKING OPEN

Scripture Study

Transfiguration Sunday
February 15th, 2026



Walk On: the Descent from the Mountain

Dennis Webster

A weekly reflection based on the teachings at St Peter's by the Lake, Paynesville, together with a study guide based on the readings, some liturgical resources RCL Lectionary, and a weekly devotion

Revised Common Lectionary Related

The Last Sunday after Epiphany

Exodus 24.12-end

Psalms 2 or Psalm 99

2 Peter 1.16-end

Matthew 17.1-9



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Book of Common Prayer (1662) Collects

Quinquagesima

O Lord, who hast taught us that all
our doings without charity are
nothing worth: Send thy Holy
Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most
excellent gift of charity, the very bond of
peace and of all virtues, without which
whosoever liveth is counted dead before
thee. Grant this for thine only Son Jesus
Christ's sake.

INTRODUCTION

In Matthew's Gospel, the Transfiguration comes as a sudden burst of light on a high ridge. Jesus, speaking now of suffering and the cross, leads the disciples along a path that feels uncertain and steep. For a moment, heaven's veil is lifted. Christ blazes with light. Moses and Elijah stand beside him. The voice of the Father echoes through the air. The disciples shiver, caught between awe and fear. It is a moment that lingers, like those times when we are overwhelmed, longing for reassurance.

Glory arrives, almost too much to bear. Peter does what any of us might do. He tries to hold on, to build something lasting, to keep the wonder from slipping away. But before he can finish, the cloud descends. The moment is not for grasping, but for listening. The voice calls them to the Son. Sometimes, all we can do is be still, listening for the quiet presence that draws us toward love and trust.

They lift their heads. The cloud is gone. Moses and Elijah have vanished. Only Jesus remains. The Law and the Prophets have faded. What is left is a presence they can trust. The mountain gives them this: the one who walks with them is enough.

This is the turning point. The light that once blinded now becomes their guide. What dazzled their eyes now steadies their hearts. They descend from the mountain into a world of shadows and uncertainty. They will walk into darkness, through villages where fear lingers in the eyes of those they meet. They will face the cross. Yet they are not alone. The presence that shone on the mountain walks with them still, a quiet strength in the midst of trial, a hope that endures.

As we walk lightly on sacred ground,
teach us Lord to make known your kingdom,
and let this reflect in all that we do and say.

Walk on:

The Descent from the Mountain

I remember those Olympic moments when the world appeared to hold its breath.

Cathy Freeman ran, and hope gathered in every heart.

Nadia Comăneci moved with impossible grace.

Torvill and Dean wrote poetry on ice.

Stephen Bradbury won gold when it seemed that the whole world collapsed in front of him.

But every skater knows this: You cannot stay in the air forever.

The routine ends. The music fades. Applause rises. The skates come off.
They return to the bench, led by trusted hands, as the spotlight moves on.

Those times of glory help me understand the Transfiguration.
Peter, James, and John go up the mountain with Jesus.
His face shines like the sun.
His clothes blaze white.
Moses and Elijah stand with him — the Law and the Prophets alive in conversation.

Peter, understandably, was overwhelmed, and says,
“Lord, it is good for us to be here. Let’s build something.”
Who would blame him?
He is not foolish; he is human.
He has seen more glory than anyone could easily carry, and he wants the moment to last.

But while he is still speaking, the cloud comes —
not to crush him, but to carry what he cannot.

And the voice says,
“This is my Beloved Son. Listen to him.”
They fall to the ground in fear.

Jesus comes to them, touches them, and says,
“Get up. Do not be afraid.”

When they look up, Moses is gone. Elijah is gone.
Only Jesus remains. Not three certainties. Just the One.

Love is the fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets. In Jesus, Peter, James, and John see all that was promised gathered into one.
Because he is there, they can stand.
Because he is there, they can breathe.
Because he is there, they can walk.

What once blazed around them must now burn within them.
It is a small light, but it is enough.

Maybe it is like carrying a lantern across a dark yard in
Paynesville. Not enough to see tomorrow. Just enough for the next
step.

Most days, that is what faith feels like. Not fireworks. Faithfulness.

Now the season turns.

Lent is near. Jesus helps them up and tells them to keep silent until all is accomplished. It is time to come down from the mountain, to leave behind the old ways, and to walk toward what is promised.

We might prefer to stay where things shine, but discipleship is learned on the road down.
So perhaps this Lent, the call is not lofty.

Light a candle in the evening.
Offer a kindness.
Say your prayers.
Small flames.
Real light.

Because mercy means this: we never walk alone.

When we stumble, Christ lifts us.
When we are tired, he remains.

And soon, at this table, the one we saw transfigured
will give himself to us again —not in lightning,
but in bread;
not in thunder, but in promise.
And it will be enough —
enough for whatever lies ahead.

The disciples will walk toward Jerusalem.
There will be cheering crowds, then betrayal, fear, and a cross.
There, when it seems all brightness has failed,
the love they saw on the mountain will still be true.

Because when everything else falls away, Jesus remains.

Peter wanted to stay where the light was dazzling. Jesus wants
the light to travel. So they go down the mountain.
And so must we.

We have seen glory.
Now we carry it into ordinary days, into uncertainty, into
conversations, into Lent.

The cloud fades, but its truth lives on in courage, through
patience, in love.
So, like the great song from Carousel, the sound of
thousands of Liverpudlians rising in hope, we walk on. No
matter what we face, we walk on. Never alone.

Christ on the mountain peak touches our shoulders, tells us not to
fear, and walks with the disciples down into the valley, carrying
the light into whatever darkness lies ahead

The season of light is ending, but the light has not left us.
It has come close enough, to walk beside us.

Maybe Liverpool were right to claim the song from Carousel, to
sing it together as a hymn of hope. Even when the way is hard, the
light remains. There is a certainty we can trust, a promise we can
hold as Christians.

Walk on, walk on, with hope in your heart,
and know that with Jesus, you'll never walk alone.

Discussion Questions

1. Overwhelmed by Glory

Matthew 17:4 Peter says, “Lord, it is good for us to be here.”

- Reflection:
When have you wished a moment with God could stay
just as it is — clear, warm, certain?
- Living it:
What might it mean to receive such moments with
gratitude without trying to control or repeat them?

2. Learning to Listen

Matthew 17:5 “This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him.”

- Reflection:
In the noise of religion, memory, and expectation, the
command is wonderfully simple.
- Living it:
Where in your life right now do you most need to stop
managing and start listening?

3. Jesus Only

Matthew 17:8 “They saw no one except Jesus himself alone.”

- Reflection:
After the drama fades, Christ remains.
- Living it:
What helps you keep your focus on Jesus when other
voices compete for your attention?

4. Light for the Road

2 Peter 1:19 A lamp shining in a dark place.

- Reflection:
Faith rarely gives the whole map — only the next
faithful step.
- Living it:
What is the next small act of obedience or kindness
God may be placing in front of you?

5. Walking Toward Jerusalem

Matthew 17:9 They come down the mountain with Jesus, toward what lies ahead.

- Reflection:
The disciples move from vision into costly love.
- Living it:
How might Christ be inviting you to carry his light into an area of difficulty, uncertainty, or service this week?

A quick note on calling this day “Transfiguration Sunday”

There are several reasons I have chosen this name for the Sunday. To be honest, the names are somewhat arbitrary. In terms of the BCP, this Sunday is 50 days before Easter and thus has the name *Quinquagesima*. In other listings, it is variously called Ordinary Sunday 6 or The Last Sunday Before Lent.

August 6th is traditionally the Feast of the Transfiguration. It falls 40 days before the Feast of the Holy Cross. (Noting a pattern here: the Sunday next before Lent, then Lent is 40 days...) It was also the date on which a battle ended and was deemed appropriate by Rome to associate this feast with that victory.

August 6th is also the time when, in the Middle East and parts of Europe/Asia Minor, grapes are roughly becoming ripe. They are indeed “changed” into a fullness of light and colour.

Many are coming to see more and more that the Transfiguration is like a ‘hinge’ moment. I do not discount or diminish August 6th, especially given that the light of evil that shone over Hiroshima in 1945 must give us all cause to stop, reflect, and be attentive to the presence of evil in the world masquerading as pure light.

The Transfiguration appears in the lectionary generally three times. Lectionaries are human inventions to help us order and learn the Scriptures. They help us read the Word of God, rather than be slaves to print and laws.

This five-day devotional will examine the darkness ahead of us as we journey into Lent. We'll explore how light, wisdom, and faithfulness guide our lives in the presence of God, right where we are, and how we can use these insights for reflection and growth.



Day 1 – The Mountain Gift

Scripture: Matthew 17:2

“He was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun.”

The disciples are given a sight they did not earn and could not create. Glory is a pure gift. For a moment, the curtain is drawn back, and they see what has always been true about Jesus.

Such moments come to us as well — flashes of clarity, peace, conviction, beauty. They are not meant to be manufactured or possessed. They are given so that memory can strengthen us when the road becomes hard.

1. When have you had an unexpected moment of spiritual clarity or comfort?
 2. What made it a gift rather than an achievement?
 3. How might remembering it help you now?
- * Thank God for one moment of light in your past.
 - * Ask for grace to treasure it without trying to repeat it.

Day 2 – Listen to Him

Scripture: Matthew 17:5

“This is my Son, the Beloved ... listen to him.”

Peter wants to build. Heaven asks him to listen. The instinct to act quickly can sometimes protect us from the vulnerability of attention.

Listening places Christ at the centre again. Before plans, before

explanations, before certainty — there is a relationship.

1. What voices compete most strongly for your attention?
2. What helps you recognise Christ's voice?
3. Where might listening be more faithful than solving?

* Sit in silence for a few minutes, simply repeating, "Speak, Lord."

* Choose one decision today to pause before reacting.

Day 3 – Jesus Only

Scripture: Matthew 17:8

"They saw no one except Jesus himself alone."

The great vision simplifies. Moses and Elijah fade; Christ remains. The disciples are not given many certainties — they are given one.

Faith often matures by subtraction. Props fall away. Supports change. Yet Jesus remains enough for what lies ahead.

1. What have you had to let go of in your faith journey?
2. How has Christ remained present through change?
3. What would it mean for him to be enough?

* Name something you are tempted to cling to.

Offer it to God.

* Pray: "Lord Jesus, stay with me."

Day 4 – Light for the Next Step

Scripture: 2 Peter 1:19

"A lamp shining in a dark place."

The disciples cannot live forever in radiance. What they carry down the mountain is a smaller, steadier light. Enough for walking.

God rarely shows the whole journey. Instead, we are given faith for today, strength for now, companionship for the moment at hand.

1. Where are you wishing for more certainty than you have?
 2. What might the "next step" be, rather than the whole map?
 3. How does a smaller light still count as real light?
- * Ask God to show you one faithful step.
- * Take it.

Day 5 – Walking with Him

Scripture: Matthew 17:7

"Jesus came and touched them."

Before they walk, they are touched. Presence precedes mission. The one who calls them forward is the one who stays beside them.

Lent will ask for endurance, honesty, repentance, and love. But none of it is solitary. Mercy means we travel accompanied.

1. Where do you most need to know Christ is near?
2. How have you experienced his nearness in ordinary ways?
3. Who might need you to be a sign of that companionship?

* Place your hand over your heart and remember his touch.

* Reach out to someone who may feel alone with kindness.

End notes and further reading

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Harrington, Daniel J Sacra Pagina: The Gospel of Matthew
Moloney, Francis J, SBD, Sacra Pagina: The Gospel of John
Johnson, Luke Timothy: Sacra Pagina: The Gospel on Luke
Collins, Raymond F., Sacra Pagina: First Corinthians
Andrew McGowan substack.com/@abmcg
N.T. Wright, Twelve months of Sundays Year A
Andrew Pratt, pastor and hymn writer (twelvebaskets.co.uk)

**Let your faith and relationships
be shaped by love and patience
for God's love is
*revealed in lives, not letters.***



Brabarlung Totem

This is produced on
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