

# AN ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION 27<sup>th</sup> February 2022

## Sunday next before Lent

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

### Hymn

#### Meekness and Majesty

1. Meekness and majesty,  
manhood and Deity,  
in perfect harmony,  
the Man who is God.  
Lord of eternity  
dwells in humanity,  
kneels in humility  
and washes our feet.  
  
*O what a mystery,  
meekness and majesty.  
Bow down and worship  
for this is your God,  
this is your God.*
2. Father's pure radiance,  
perfect in innocence,  
yet learns obedience  
to death on a cross.  
Suffering to give us life,  
conquering through sacrifice,  
and as they crucify  
prays: 'Father forgive.'  
*Refrain*
3. Wisdom unsearchable,  
God the invisible,  
love indestructible  
in frailty appears.  
Lord of infinity,  
stooping so tenderly,  
lifts our humanity  
to the heights of His throne.  
*Refrain*

Graham Kendrick  
(CCLI 1400)

On Mount Tabor the apostles got a glimpse of the glory that was his as the Son of God. So wonderful was the experience that Peter exclaimed, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here.' And it is good for us to be here today, together but apart, as children of God who share in his glory.

Lord Jesus, here you forgive our sins so that we are able to forgive one another.  
Lord have mercy  
**Lord have mercy**

Here, you strengthen our faith and renew our hope.  
Christ have mercy  
**Christ have mercy**

Here, you enlighten us by the word of God, and show us the path to glory.

Lord have mercy

**Lord have mercy**

May the God of love and power forgive us and free us from our sins, heal and strengthen us by God's Spirit, and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

*The Collect (special prayer for today)*

Almighty Father, whose Son was revealed in majesty before he suffered death upon the cross: give us grace to perceive his glory, that we may be strengthened to suffer with him and be changed into his likeness, from glory to glory; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

**Amen**

## **READINGS**

Exodus 34:29-35

Moses came down from Mount Sinai. As he came down from the mountain with the two tablets of the covenant in his hand, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, the skin of his face was shining, and they were afraid to come near him. But Moses called to them; and **Aaron** and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses spoke with them. Afterwards all the Israelites came near, and he gave them in commandment all that the LORD had spoken with him on Mount Sinai. When Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face; but whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he would take the veil off, until he came out; and when he came out, and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, the Israelites would see the face of Moses, that the skin of his face was shining; and Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2

## **GOSPEL READING** Luke 9:28-36

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.

## **REFLECTION**

My great Aunt; Auntie Hilda loved the film 'The Sound of Music' and was one of those people that you may have heard about who went to see the film many, many times. You, yourself, may even be one of those people. But she and her friend were so enamoured with the film that they made several trips to the Austrian Tyrol to visit where the story is set. One of her favourite songs from the film was 'climb every mountain'; the advice given to Maria by the Mother Superior, meaning that we should face with courage every challenge that confronts us. Being a person who loved the countryside, and who had an incredibly strong faith, Auntie Hilda, not only noticed that the hills were alive with the sound of music; the sounds of bird song, insects, and so on, but also the music in her heart as she basked in the grandeur of the awe-inspiring views. She always said that there on the mountains she felt so close to the splendour of God, and realized how puny our best efforts are in comparison with the glory of his creation.

I suppose, this is what we sometimes refer to as a mountain top experience; although it can come upon us unexpectedly anywhere, not only in the mountains. There are so many places where we can catch a glimpse of the awesome loveliness of nature, and at such times we gain an insight into the creative power of God.

So it was on a mountain top that his disciples had a vision of who Jesus was, and the meaning of his ministry. In today's Gospel reading, we heard that 'Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray.' Explaining in words what he was up to could only take them so far; to lead them to a deeper understanding, Jesus had to give them an experience of prayer. In the silence with no distraction from the noise and bustle of daily life, they could concentrate on God. In the pure air of the hills, they felt able to approach God's holy presence.

Mount Tabor which is traditionally regarded as the site of the Transfiguration, rises steeply out of the plain of Jezreel, where so many battles had taken place. The climb would have been exhausting, and in their tired state the disciples could well

have thought about Mount Sinai, where God appeared to Moses and gave him the ten Commandments. Or perhaps God's revelation to Elijah in the still small voice on the mountain top. He spoke to Moses from the cloud. So when they heard a voice speaking from the cloud they realized that it was God himself. God said, 'This is my Son, my chosen; listen to him!'. So the disciples gained an insight into the true nature of their friend Jesus.

When the vision was ended, Jesus led them down again from the mountain to the plain. There a man grabbed hold of them and demanded that they heal his epileptic son. They must have felt that they had come down to earth with a bump. But that is the way it generally is with a mountain top experience. God gives us these very special times of joy in our lives for a purpose. They're meant to prepare us and strengthen us for the challenges that follow. We can't lie back and enjoy our visions of beauty, wherever they occur. We need to use them to inspire and strengthen us to show practical love to our neighbours. We need to let the radiance that the disciples saw in Jesus' face shine through us into the lives of others, to bring joy and transformation to **them**.

I'm not quite sure where this really fits in, but I know that it does. You may remember the TV advert for Cancer Research UK which was filmed in a Newcastle hospital in 2016. It shows the then four year-old Adyan, who was undergoing treatment after his acute myeloid leukaemia had relapsed. As part of his treatment, Adyan received a type of chemotherapy, and a bone marrow transplant from his sister. He is shown sitting intubated on a hospital bed, singing with his teacher 'heads, shoulders, knees and toes'. He looks a sorry little sight until the last line of the song when the doctor, instead of singing 'knees and toes' sings 'cheese on toast'. Adyan's reaction is one of sheer joy. His whole face lights up. He is transfigured. This small child, in such difficult circumstances, lightened the hearts of many people. I wonder, whatever our situation, are we prepared to do the same, and show how the light of Christ can transform lives? **Amen**

As God's people, let us pray to him now.

Father, we long to shine with your light. Set our hearts on fire with love for you and for one another.

May our lives proclaim: **that the Lord our God is holy**

Father, cleanse your Church of all hypocrisy and bigotry, and focus our attention on you, so that divisions and barriers crumble to dust.

May our lives proclaim: **that the Lord our God is holy**

Father, send lives of light among the darkness of injustice, corruption and despair, and strengthen those who are already shining in dark places all over the world.

May our lives proclaim: **that the Lord our God is holy**

Father, come into our homes and make them places of welcome, where your love is woven into all our relationships.

May our lives proclaim: **that the Lord our God is holy**

Father, give courage to those who have to suffer physical pain, or mental and emotional anguish. Enable them to draw on your resources, and transform all their pain and sorrow.

May our lives proclaim: **that the Lord our God is holy**

Father, welcome into your kingdom of everlasting light all who have come to the point of death. Comfort those who miss their physical presence, and bring us all to spend eternity in the radiance of your presence.

May our lives proclaim: **that the Lord our God is holy**

Merciful Father, **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen**

*Prayers by Susan Sayers*

*Gathering together all our prayers, we say the prayer that Jesus gave us*

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come; thy will be done;  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation;  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen**

**Hymn**

**Lord, the Light of Your Love is Shining**

1. Lord, the light of Your love is shining,  
in the midst of the darkness, shining:  
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us;  
set us free by the truth You now bring us -  
shine on me, shine on me.

*Shine, Jesus, shine,  
fill this land with the Father's glory;  
blaze, Spirit, blaze,  
set our hearts on fire.  
Flow, river, flow,  
flood the nations with grace and mercy;  
send forth Your word,  
Lord, and let there be light!*

2. Lord, I come to Your awesome presence,  
from the shadows into Your radiance;  
by the blood I may enter Your brightness:  
set us free by the truth You now bring us  
shine on me, shine on me.

*Chorus*

3. As we gaze on Your kingly brightness  
so our faces display Your likeness,  
ever changing from glory to glory:  
mirrored here, may our lives tell your story -  
shine on me, shine on me.

*Chorus*

Graham Kendrick (born 1950)  
(CCLI 30426, One Licence 27324)

*We give thanks for the saving death and resurrection of Jesus and ask him to be with us now*

**Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ,  
for all the benefits you have given me,  
for all the pains and insults you have borne for me.  
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,  
I ask you to come spiritually into my heart.  
O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,  
may I know you more clearly, love you more dearly,  
and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen**

*We pray God's blessing on each other*

May you live a life worthy of God, who is calling you to share the glory of his kingdom.

May you be good witnesses for the Gospel by the love and joy you radiate.

May God, who has called us to eternal glory in Christ, strengthen and support you with his grace.

And the blessing of God Almighty,

the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit

be with you and those whom you love and pray for,

this day and for evermore. **Amen**