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The Epistle#

August, 2015#

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Father Bob's message

The Feast of the Transfiguration

The Church celebrates the Feast of the Transfiguration on 6 August. It is a narrative that is found in all three synoptic gospels. Now while it is not one of those Feasts of the Church that we go out of the way to celebrate, it is a critical turning point in Jesus's ministry and mission.

Moses and Elijah appear on a mountain with Jesus, whose appearance has radically changed. All of this happens in front of Peter, John and James, who really do not seem to know quite what to make of all this. I cannot really blame them; it is a strange story to be sure. But rather than seek a rational understanding of the spectacular details of the story, as the synoptic gospel writers tell it, it might be more helpful to consider why it is told rather than what is said.

The Transfiguration is a story that calls you and me to face our

understanding of Jesus's identity: "Who is Jesus to me?" and "Who is Jesus to us?" Although you and I hear the gospel story over and over again, we still have trouble accepting a Christ of God whose glory comes through suffering and death, through a cross, an act of love and self-giving.

After 2000 plus years, you and I are still a bit reluctant to embrace this message. Our cultural trappings around Christianity have distorted his glory as being grounded in something other than his suffering, death, and resurrection. We are always tempted to wrap Jesus in all kinds of false messages, because glory through suffering still does not make sense to us.

We see evidence of this when we hear Jesus wrapped in nationalism by those who claim we are a "Christian nation" and attempt to enshrine biblical interpretation in secular law. Please understand me here, I believe that our Christian values and priorities must inform and influence our political endeavors as a country. I also believe that the 1st Amendment exists because the founding Fathers were not concerned about the Church being involved in government but that the government would be involved in the Church. Political leaders from Benjamin Franklin to Dwight D. Eisenhower have encouraged attendance at Church, any Church, for the citizens of the nation because they believed that it made them better citizens.

We see evidence of these false messages in claims of prosperity

from preachers and theologians who make outlandish claims that all God wants to do is to bless you with more wealth and privilege, and imply that if you do not receive these blessings, it is because you are not “right with the Lord.” I remember being horrified by a young chaplain relating how he prayed with the soldiers in a convoy he was with in Iraq. He told how he prayed for their safety and how as they drove north into Iraq, God protected them. The convoy was never hit. He then related how a convoy that followed his was shot up pretty bad and took a number of deaths and seriously wounded in an ambush along the same MSR. This chaplain told the soldiers that it was God that had protected them, implying that God had not protected the other soldiers because they were obviously not right with God. It took one of my NCO’s to hold me back from inflicting another casualty, that chaplain. Think of the message he was giving about God.

All of these false messages of glory through something other than the cross are false teachings. They persist because God’s glory revealed through the cross, death, and resurrection just does not make rational sense to the world.

The truth is that just because something appears to not be rational to the human mind does not mean that it is not real. We sometimes call it a miracle.

Senior Warden Update

It is hard to believe it is August. The children will soon be back at school and in conjunction with that St. Stephen’s has been collecting school supplies for Geiger Elementary. We will be taking the supplies to Geiger the week just before school begins. The generosity has been overwhelming and a big thank you goes out to all who have helped. In addition to the supplies we are also giving funds from our Outreach account to assist those who can’t afford the uniforms. Both projects are now a tradition at St. Stephen’s. The staff, parents, and students always appreciate what we do to help and last year recognized our assistance with an award that Fr. Bob received for the church. If you haven’t noticed it is in the parish hall. Educating the children is extremely important and St. Stephen’s has been in the forefront of assisting. Finally, Karen Siegling is opening the Ridgeway Station Café at the corner of Ruff and South Dogwood streets soon. She hopes everyone will drop by for breakfast, lunch or both. Another great place, with atmosphere, to eat in Ridgeway is very welcome.

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Congratulations!

David and Amanda Ford have a beautiful granddaughter, Thaleia Dorothy Thomas. She was born June 30th and was 8 lbs. 11 oz., 20 inches. Fionna now has the sister she has always wanted!

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DID YOU SIGN UP FOR
HOSPITALITY SOON?



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AUGUST

8/2	Berk/Koenig
8/9	OPEN
8/16	OPEN
8/23	OPEN
8/30	OPEN

SEPTEMBER

9/6	Dee Dee Branham
9/13	OPEN
9/20	Patti Earle
9/27	OPEN



*Please wish the following people,
a Happy Birthday:*

AUGUST

8/1	Anna Federico
8/3	Tommy Copley
8/3	Amanda Ford
8/5	Christine Langdale
8/6	Elsie Moore
8/6	Karen Siegling
8/11	Patti Palmer
8/14	Christopher Floyd
8/15	Beth Branham
8/17	Mason Ryder Owens
8/18	Allison Milling
8/21	Madighan McMaster

SEPTEMBER

9/15	George C Langdale
9/15	Samantha Robinson
9/15	Peter Saless
9/21	Carolyn Cosby
9/26	Gaye Milling
9/28	John Cosby
9/30	Berk Palmer

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We had a baby shower ☺

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A Special Thanks:

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I would like to say a special Thank You to everyone who helped to make the Baby Shower for Emily Catoe, such a Huge Success. The Food was simply delicious. The fellowship was simply wonderful. Thanks to Carter Siegling, the Brave Male who defied the odds to be in attendance to take pictures. Thanks to Tom Harwood, who made sure that the Fellowship Hall was cool enough for all the women who had various body temperatures. For one reason or another, as you might realize, a bunch of women in one place is sometimes hard to please. Thanks to Beth Branham, who provided the delicious chicken salad sandwiches, to Carol Gainey , for the ham turkey and cheese sandwiches. To Fannie Ford for providing the cakes, and to MaryJane Lever for the chips and potato salad, and last but by no means least, to Karen Siegling for the beautiful Baby carriage which she tirelessly carved out of a water melon; not to forget the delicious pink deviled eggs. For Patsy Palmer who did the flowers so beautifully, and also helped with the decorations, and to Patti, for all her help in putting everything together.

Thanks to all the ladies who helped with the clean up.

Sincerely,

Beverley Anderson