

A Service for Justice and Peace **We built it now for the Transfiguration!**

Exodus 34:29-35 The Shining Face of Moses

²⁹ 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. ³⁰ When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, the skin of his face was shining, and they were afraid to come near him. ³¹ But Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses spoke with them. ³² Afterward all the Israelites came near, and he gave them in commandment all that the Lord had spoken with him on Mount Sinai. ³³ When Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face, ³⁴ 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, ³⁵ 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.

Luke 9:28-36 The Transfiguration

²⁸ Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus^[a] took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. ²⁹ And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. ³⁰ Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. ³¹ They appeared in glory and were speaking about his exodus, which he was about to fulfill in Jerusalem. ³² Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep, but as they awoke they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. ³³ Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us set up three tents: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah," not realizing what he was saying. ³⁴ While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. ³⁵ Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my Son, my Chosen;^[b] listen to him!" ³⁶ 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.

Vox Pop #1: Do you have a favourite place that helps you experience God?

Vox Pop #2=Do you have special person who helps you experience God?

Access to God

These two questions have been normal throughout human history - a special place or designated person is the way to access God.

The Hebraic tradition is a version of this story - you want access to God - then it is through their prophets and priests, through their tabernacle and temple.

The Christian tradition has often mimicked this - you want to access to God - then it is through our ministers and churches.

The life of Jesus constantly highlights the competition between Hebraic and Roman views as to who had the preferred designated person or place to access God.

The Jews said the temple and the Romans said it was Caesar.

Transfiguration

The first thing Peter, James and John do when they see the transfigured Jesus is suggest they build a special place for special people.

Just prior, Jesus declares the Kingdom of God is about suffering and service - the kingdom of God is like no other kingdom.

Jesus' good news is not about special people or special places as the way to meet God - everybody and every place can be special.

God's mission is accessible to anyone anywhere anything anytime.

If there are no special people and special places to experience God where can you experience God?

Of course, our barren Australian spiritual landscape too often is inclined to suggest God is accessible through no one, nowhere, nothing and at no time.

Simply, Jesus in the transfiguration invites a different view - any person and any place can be special shining the gloried Jesus

- irrespective of their status and importance

- footpaths, pub, schools, sporting fields, Gaza, Ukraine, Tibet

- smart phones, musical instruments, trees, food, beverages, homes, cars,

- at work, holidays, asleep, celebrations or occasions of loss.

We are part of Jesus anyone anywhere anything anytime kingdom of God.

This inclusive dynamic is an essential part of the good news of Jesus.

MUC Transfiguration

So now that we have our MUC building there is the temptation to think we are a more special place with special people like me!

The question before us is how our building will serve the God of Jesus whose mission is not limited to anyone anywhere anything anytime.

Illustration: Field of Dreams

Suddenly a guy builds a baseball field in the backyard of his farmhouse.

Everyone, his family, his neighbours, his friends think he is crazy. The motto of the film, 'build it and they will come'. A little like Noah building his ark.

Eventually some baseball players from the past, emerge out of the corn field and turn up to play. The key is who comes to play. There was a famous World Series in 1919 where some of the players took bribes to throw the game. A tremendous scandal. Disillusioning and disheartening. They are all banned from playing the game again. Some of those banned may have been innocent. In a mythical twist, those are the players who turn up to play. Those are the ones who needed to play the game.

Postscript

As we journey into Easter story - the ascension of Jesus is the amen to this Transfiguration.

The key is that Jesus is not around to become a special person who needs a special place

God's mission is though those who would follow Jesus