

## The Transfiguration of the Lord – August 6, 2017 – Good Shepherd Parish

### Scripture Reading: Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14

As I watched:

Thrones were set up  
and the Ancient One took his throne.  
His clothing was bright as snow,  
and the hair on his head as white as wool;  
his throne was flames of fire,  
with wheels of burning fire.  
A surging stream of fire  
flowed out from where he sat;  
Thousands upon thousands were ministering to him,  
and myriads upon myriads attended him.  
The court was convened and the books were opened.

As the visions during the night continued, I saw:

One like a Son of man coming,  
on the clouds of heaven;  
When he reached the Ancient One  
and was presented before him,  
The one like a Son of man received dominion, glory,  
and kingship;  
all peoples, nations, and languages serve him.  
His dominion is an everlasting dominion  
that shall not be taken away,  
his kingship shall not be destroyed.

### Psalm: Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 9

R. (1a and 9a) **The Lord is king, the Most High over all the earth.**

The LORD is king; let the earth rejoice;  
let the many islands be glad.  
Clouds and darkness are round about him,  
justice and judgment are the foundation of his throne.

R. **The Lord is king, the Most High over all the earth.**

The mountains melt like wax before the LORD,  
before the LORD of all the earth.  
The heavens proclaim his justice,  
and all peoples see his glory.

R. **The Lord is king, the Most High over all the earth.**

Because you, O LORD, are the Most High over all the earth,  
exalted far above all gods.

R. **The Lord is king, the Most High over all the earth.**

### Scripture Reading: 2 Peter 1:16-19

Beloved:

We did not follow cleverly devised myths  
when we made known to you  
the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty.  
For he received honor and glory from God the Father  
when that unique declaration came to him from the  
majestic glory,  
"This is my Son, my beloved, with whom I am well  
pleased."  
We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven  
while we were with him on the holy mountain.  
Moreover, we possess the prophetic message that is  
altogether reliable.  
You will do well to be attentive to it,  
as to a lamp shining in a dark place,  
until day dawns and the morning star rises in your  
hearts.

### Gospel: Matthew 17:1-9

Jesus took Peter, James, and his brother, John,  
and led them up a high mountain by themselves.  
And he was transfigured before them;  
his face shone like the sun  
and his clothes became white as light.  
And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them,  
conversing with him.  
Then Peter said to Jesus in reply,  
"Lord, it is good that we are here.  
If you wish, I will make three tents here,  
one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."  
While he was still speaking, behold,  
a bright cloud cast a shadow over them,  
then from the cloud came a voice that said,  
"This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased;  
listen to him."  
When the disciples heard this, they fell prostrate  
and were very much afraid.  
But Jesus came and touched them, saying,  
"Rise, and do not be afraid."  
And when the disciples raised their eyes,  
they saw no one else but Jesus alone.

As they were coming down from the mountain,  
Jesus charged them,  
"Do not tell the vision to anyone  
until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

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### **INVITATION TO PRAY**

*Pause for a few moments of silence and enter more deeply into the presence of God.*

### **Proclaim the Scriptures out loud.**

As you listen to the scriptures be attentive to a word, a phrase, a question, an image, or a feeling that emerges. Reflect on this quietly or share it aloud.

### **INVITATION TO REFLECT**

I love the First Reading. I suppose this is obvious from the fact that I wrote the hymn, “Come to the Water,” which is based on it. That was a long time ago (c 1971), but I remember it clearly. The St. Louis Jesuits were only just forming and we took a summer to write together out in Berkeley, CA. We always composed music individually and then presented it to one another for critique. For my part I wrote two hymns, and when it was time I played them for the others. I remember the exact spot where I stood. You probably think one of them was Come to the Water, but it wasn't. I don't even remember the names of those two pieces. The unanimous reaction of my brothers in Christ was, “Yuck!” “These just don't work!” “What were you *thinking*?” These tender comments encouraged me to file the errant pieces in the round file and try again. But I had learned something. I could not just “dash off” music. I had to believe in it and believe in what it was saying. So I searched the scriptures and prayed. The result? A setting of the following First Reading for this Sunday. All you who are thirsty, come to the water! You who have no money, come, receive grain and eat; Come, without paying and without cost, drink wine and milk! Why spend your money for what is not bread; your wages for what fails to satisfy? Heed me, and you shall eat well, you shall delight in rich fare. We composers and authors do not actually know what happens when inspiration hits. I only know that I began writing immediately, and that something inside was guiding me. “Come to the Water” was born. I continue to believe in it and stand behind what it says.

Both the song and the scripture passage express a solution to the needs and aches in our bodies and souls. The love we received when we were children was true, in spite of whatever wounds and reversals any of us received then or afterwards. The inside chambers of our self are truly and thoroughly loved by the giving God. Jesus shows this to us in the Gospel. He was himself aching. He had been told about the death of his dear teacher and friend, John the Baptist. He wanted to get away from people, to let himself feel the loss. But look what happened. Crowds tracked his boat and figured out where he was headed. They ran around the lake and waited as he pulled up to shore. Gone was his chance to mourn, at least for the moment. Maybe he should have told them to go away and come back later. But scripture says, “his heart was moved with pity for them, and he cured their sick.” Even more, he gave them food, a tiny bit of food that multiplied so that there was enough. If you look at it, he was doing exactly what the First Reading and “Come to the Water” are talking about. His pity for them resulted in his giving them the rich fare from the First Reading. Never mind that he was hungry and surely thirsty. His mind was on letting the people, who had no money, come and receive grain and eat. He is our model and our teacher.

### **INVITATION TO GROUP SHARING**

1. How does "Come, without paying ... you shall eat well" in this reading, relate to "They all ate and were satisfied" in the Gospel? What is the food that can satisfy your soul's deepest hunger?
2. Whose strength is it that allows nothing to separate you from the love of God?

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3. Feeding 5000 would have been a large task. Aren't some problems too big to handle? How do you look at "insurmountable" tasks in your own life? What did you think of when you read, "He looked up to heaven and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples?"

### **INVITATION TO ACT**

Determine a specific action (individual or group) that flows from your sharing. When choosing an individual action, determine what you will do and share it with the group. When choosing a group action, determine who will take responsibility for different aspects of the action. These should be your primary considerations.

### **CLOSING INVITATION TO PRAY**

Give thanks to God (aloud or silently) for new insights, for desires awakened, for directions clarified, for the gift of one another's openness and sensitivity. Conclude with the following:

Draw near to your servants, O Lord, and answer their prayers with unceasing kindness, that, for those who glory in you as their Creator and guide, you may restore what you have created and keep safe what you have restored. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen

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