

Transfiguration of our Lord
Sermon Text: Mark 9:2-9
Date Preached: February 22, 2009

God of grace, shine upon our hearts that we may reflect the abundant love you have given us in your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

Places have meaning for us. Places are important. Places are a part of our history, corporately and personally.

On the personal aspect I've been to many a parishioner's home where he or she has lived some sixty, seventy or eighty years. The place they grew up is the same place they have raised their children.

There are other places that of course have important memories as well. You may remember the place where you had your first kiss, the place where you proposed, the place where you got married, to name but a few. We feel a connection to these places because of the moments we experienced.

The same can be said of a Church. The Church is a place where we feel connected certainly to God. It is also a place where we feel connected to family and friends. The church is the place for many of us where we were baptized, confirmed and married.

The church is also the place where we feel connected to loved ones who have died.

In the case of a Church we wish to memorialize portions of the building by putting up plaques and have names etched into the stained glass of people who have been important in our lives. It is a way for us to honor the place, the people and the events that have shaped our life.

The church is a place where we will give our money knowing that it is not only needed, but in some ways will preserve the place that has been important to us.

When Jesus took Peter, James and John up to this high mountain, we don't know what these disciples expected. Given their reaction, they certainly did not expect to see a glimpse of Jesus in his glory. They didn't expect to see the pillars of Jewish history, Moses and Elijah standing in their presence.

The disciples are awe-struck. This is not an every day event they are experiencing. Something special is taking place here. Thus, it is a very human thing to want to memorialize such places. That is one aspect of Peter's request.

Lord, let us erect three dwellings. Yes, Peter no doubt has a practical aspect in mind. At the same time however, there is also the desire to erect something that will last. Let's build places that will memorialize this event. Let's put up something that will be around for future generations to come and say, this is the place where Jesus, Moses and Elijah appeared together.

But this is not where Jesus lets them stay. Jesus leads Peter, James and John down the mountain. Jesus leads them away from the mountain that temporarily insulated them from the worries of the world.

When we gather for Sunday school and worship in this place, we come away for a part of our week from the worries of the world. We come seeking shelter from the stresses of work, the fears of our economy, the seemingly endless news of drug use in sports, violence both near and far, to name only a few things.

It is important for us to come apart. It is important that we are affirmed in this place, renewed in a community of faith, nourished at the table with Jesus body and blood and hear the Gospel proclaimed.

But this is not where Jesus lets us stay. The kingdom of God must go out. Just as Jesus did not let his inner

circle of disciples stay on the mountain, so we too are led out from this place into a world where the need is great.

The need is great among the elderly who struggle to stay in their homes for whom making a meal is difficult. Our churches have invested volunteer time and money to provide meals on wheels.

The need is great among care givers who spend day after day tending to the needs of a loved one. The cost of sending a card, making a phone call or sending an e-mail, pales in comparison to the message sent that says we care about you as you care for your loved one.

The ministries that meet the needs of people beyond the walls of a Church structure are every bit as deserving of our investment of time and money. Such ministries may not be recognized with a plaque.

Places are important. Yet, places are the means through which the Good news of Jesus touches the lives of individuals.

It is our calling as God's children, to proclaim the crucified and risen Christ. Such good news is life giving.

The good news reorients us. It focuses us beyond the things we do and don't have, to the hope we have in God. In that way, our trust in God to provide is deepened.

The things we think we need, we discover that we can do without. We discover a way of living that drives us to love our neighbor, for in doing so we also encounter the presence of God. AMEN.