**Morning Praise @ Home Sunday 26th September 2021**

**Opening prayer**

Blessed are you, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, you have blessed us with every spiritual blessing; enable us by your power to be true to our calling and live holy and blameless lives before you all our days, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. **Amen**

**Confession** Let us admit to God the sin which always confronts us.

**Lord God, we have sinned against you; we have done evil in your sight. We are sorry and**

**repent.** **Have mercy on us according to your love. Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us**

**from our sin.** **Renew a right spirit within us** **and restore us to the joy of your salvation,** **through**

**Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen** cf Psalm 51

**Absolution** May the Father of all mercies cleanse us from our sins, and restore us in his image

to the praise and glory of his name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.  **Amen.**

### Bible Readings Psalm 19:7-14 Mark 9:1-8

**Reflection by Ruth**

Science teachers never tire, so I’m told, of the moment when a child first looks into a microscope. What up until then had seemed a boring little speck of dirt can suddenly become full of pattern, colour and interest. The child will never look at things the same way again; everything now has the potential to be more than it seems. The same thing happens elsewhere. Telescopes transform the night sky into a world of awe and power. A good actor can turn an apparently insignificant line into a profound and moving statement of beauty and truth. Take those quite common experiences and move them up a few notches on the scale of fact and experience. The story of Jesus’ ‘transformation’ or ‘transfiguration’ describes what seems to have been an actual event, but an event in which the deepest significance of everyday reality suddenly and overwhelmingly confronted Peter, James and John. It’s easy enough (and they themselves must have known this) to dismiss such an experience as a hallucination, albeit a very odd one. Jewish scriptures and traditions tell of various events like this, when the veil of ordinariness that normally prevents us from seeing the ‘inside’ of a situation is drawn back, and a fuller reality is disclosed. Most of us don’t have experiences like this (nor did most early Christians, so far as we can tell); but unless we allow sceptics to bully us we should be free to affirm that this sort of thing has indeed happened to some people (usually completely unexpectedly), and that such people usually regard it as hugely important and life-changing. The three watchers and the others were of course terrified. Peter blurts out the first thing that comes into his head, trying vaguely not only to prolong the moment but to hook it in to one of the Jewish festivals. That wasn’t the point, but the sheer oddity of his bumbling suggestion is itself strong evidence of the story’s basic truth. Nobody inventing a tale like this would make up such a comic moment, lowering the tone of the occasion in such a fashion. But what are we to say? Can we look at the whole thing (as Jesus had previously urged Peter to look at things) not just from a human point of view, but from God’s point of view? With caution and humility, we might try. Take a step back. What has happened in the gospel so far? Jesus has, metaphorically speaking, led the disciples up the high mountain of a new view of God’s kingdom. In extraordinary actions and puzzling but profound words he has unveiled for them what God is up to. Those ‘outside’ look and look, but never see; the disciples are having their eyes opened, so that they can see for the first time the inner reality of God’s kingdom, and the central truth that – even though he doesn’t look like what they might have expected! – Jesus really is the Messiah. Thus the story so far keeps telling us about eyes being opened, in several senses, and it all concentrates on Jesus himself and God’s kingdom that is arriving with him. Now Jesus takes the disciples literally up a high mountain, and something similar happens, though on another level. Western culture is increasingly realizing, what most other cultures have never forgotten, that the world we live in has many layers, many dimensions, and that sometimes these dimensions, normally hidden, may appear. Then, like the child with the microscope, we can look for a moment into a different reality, gasp with wonder, and ever afterwards see everything differently. That’s how it was on this mountain. What was the inner reality of Jesus’ work? He was continuing and completing the tasks of the great prophet Elijah, and, behind him, of the greatest prophet of old, Moses himself. Both of them, interestingly, had disappeared from view rather than died in the ordinary way, surrounded by their families and friends; legends grew up about their being somehow spared proper death. Now they reappear, with the veil of ordinariness drawn back for a moment, and Jesus is with them, shining with a brilliant light. People are often fuzzy about what this means. It isn’t a revelation of Jesus’ divinity; if it were, that would make Elijah and Moses divine too, which Mark certainly doesn’t want us to think. Once again, Mark believes in Jesus’ divinity, but hasn’t yet told us why. Rather, as the similar experiences of mystics in various ages and cultures would suggest, this is a sign of Jesus being entirely caught up with, bathed in, the love, power and kingdom of God, so that it transforms his whole being with light, in the way that music transforms words that are sung. This is the sign that Jesus is not just indulging in fantasies about God’s kingdom, but that he is speaking and doing the truth. It’s the sign that he is indeed the true prophet, the true Messiah. That, too, is what the heavenly voice is saying. Jesus is God’s special, beloved son. Elijah and Moses were vital in preparing the way; Jesus is finishing the job. Mark is happy for later Christian readers to hear, in the phrase ‘son of God’, fuller meanings than the disciples would have heard. For them, the primary meaning, as with the voice at the baptism, is that Jesus is Messiah. That’s enough to be going on with.
Once again Jesus tells them not to reveal what they have seen. This time he gives them a cryptic time-frame: ‘until the son of man has risen from the dead’. Not surprisingly, this puzzles them. In Jewish thought of the time, ‘the resurrection’ would happen to all the righteous at the end of time, not to one person ahead of all the others. What could Jesus mean by implying that ‘the son of man’ would rise from the dead, while they would be still living the sort of normal life in which people would tell one another what they had seen months or years before? Mark’s readers would already know about Jesus’ resurrection, but the characters in his story certainly didn’t, and weren’t expecting it. Like much that Jesus said, it remained cryptic and puzzling until after the event. The final exchange is even more teasing. The disciples are trying to work it out; scripture, they know, tells them that Elijah will prepare the way for the Messiah. (Mark has already quoted the relevant passage, right at the start of his gospel.) Jesus has other scriptures to hand as well, though, which speak to him of his own vocation; this time, he seems to be blending Daniel 7 with Isaiah 53, a powerful combination we’ll look at later on. But the fateful identification, the one that matters, is his cryptic comment about Elijah having already come. John the Baptist has done that job. Now there is nothing left but the final messianic task, the task which Jesus has already declared will involve his own suffering and death. All this could remain puzzling to us, too. We don’t generally experience things as dramatic as this story. We don’t often try to interpret the details of our lives and our times according to a detailed scriptural plot. But each of us is called to do what the heavenly voice said: Listen to Jesus, because he is God’s beloved son. And as we learn to listen, even if sometimes we get scared and say all the wrong things, we may find that glory creeps up on us unawares, strengthening us, as it did the disciples, for the road ahead.

**Affirmation of faith**

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist?

 **We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son, who took our human nature, died for us and rose again?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ

known in the world? **We believe and trust in him. This is the faith of the Church.**

**This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

**Prayers of intercession led by Basil**

Father, we pray for the world where men and women are lost and children are unloved and afraid; for the world where people worship anyone and anything - rather than their maker; for the world in its need of hope and renewal; for the world, where might is right and the weak are crushed; for the world where there is darkness. We pray for the world in need of the transforming light and life of Christ.

Lord in our mercy: hear our prayer.

Father, we pray for our nation, that has turned its back on its Saviour; for our nation where the name of 'Christ' is rarely heard except as a blasphemy; for our nation, where the rich get richer and the poor are ignored; for our nation, where young lives are abused and corrupted by false values and attitudes, which are accepted as normal. We pray for our nation, as it needs to begin again.

Lord in your mercy: hear our prayer.

Father, we pray for our nation, where nothing is thought wrong - if it is what you want to do and it seems right to you; for our nation that worships the false Gods of materialism, science and pleasure, but has no time or space in its action-packed existence for the God who is offering the freedom to live, for our nation that keeps on running, so it won't have to think. We pray for our nation, in need of repentance, forgiveness and peace.

Lord in your mercy: hear our prayer.

Father, we pray for our community, where many feel forgotten; for those around us who are empty and hurting, broken and lost; for those around us who feel they are on the scrap heap of life; for those whose skills are no longer needed and have time on their hands; for our community where many are isolated - by their lack of ability, their poverty or their failure to be loved; for our community where many long for acceptance, love, understanding and hope. We pray for those who have fallen into any kind of addiction; we pray for our community in need of each other and their Lord.

Lord in your mercy: hear our prayer.

Father, we pray for the one church of Jesus Christ - that we may be one in him; that our witness, our worship and our service may be worthy of Him. We ask for wisdom, understanding, truth and sensitivity in the whole of our life - together with Jesus; for the joy and wonder of knowing that our fellowship here is designed for eternity. We pray that our churches will be a home for sinners and a place where all are welcome and where people are made whole in Christ.

Lord in your mercy: hear our prayer.

Father, we pray for any we know to be in need, for those who are ill and for those who are unsure of what tomorrow will bring. We remember David and all known personally to us. We pray for our neighbours, family and friends and any we know to hear of the love of God, to feel the touch of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ upon their hearts and to experience the life changing power of the Holy Spirit.

Lord in your mercy: hear our prayer.

Father, we pray for ourselves, we pray for all we must do and say and face in the coming days of this week; for the words of faith we should share and the prayers for others for which we need words; for the challenges we know we must face and the pressure and pain and the stress of each day.

We pray for ourselves and ask for the transforming love of Christ to go with us. We pray for Cathy, Steve and their family as Cathy takes on the work of a new parish after her induction earlier this morning and getting to grips with serving God in another diocese. We pray that Cathy and Steve will be as settled as they were with us and that God will bless them both and their family in the days, weeks, months and years ahead in the new churches that God has called Cathy to serve.

Lord in your mercy: hear our prayer.

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

**The Lord’s Prayer** As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

***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 today our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen***

**Closing prayer**

God give you grace to become the people He has called you to be,

that you may live and work to his praise and glory,

and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit

be with us and remain with us always. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. **In the name of Christ. Amen**