

The Last Sunday after the Epiphany, Year C  
The Reverend D.S. Mote, PhD  
St Paul's Episcopal Church, Key West, FL  
February 27, 2022  
Exodus 34:29-35  
Psalm 99  
2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2  
Luke 9:28-36 (37-43a)

## Seeing What Was There All Along

What is going on here today? Every Sunday it is something else. What is up with that new rector? You just never know what will happen next. And I just want to say, isn't that just like what it is like to follow Jesus? If you keep walking, you just never know what will happen next.

Today I am here to announce that we are beginning our community retreat. Did you know we were going on retreat? All together? We are! Guess for how long? 49 days! Whaaaa? So, hang on tight.

This is the last Sunday after the Epiphany, and every year, no matter how many Sundays are in the season of Epiphany, the last Sunday of Epiphany is Transfiguration Sunday. So here we are.

Until about 800 years ago, the Church began the Great 100 Days on this day, Transfiguration Sunday, Day 1. Day 100, the day of Pentecost. For 46 days, Lent. For three days, the Sacred Triduum. For 50 days, Eastertide.

We are going old, old old-school at St Paul's this year. We are starting the Great 100 Days today, and we are beginning our community retreat. What are we going to do on retreat? We are going to discern. Together.

Because until about 800 years ago, the Church, gathered in congregations from place to place, would, beginning on Transfiguration Sunday, enter a time of intentional community discernment. Kind of like a community retreat. And in that period, we would reflect as a congregation on what was out of alignment, what had gotten out of kilter since the last time around.

What needs to be let go of? What needs to be taken up?

Today we're going to sit with that question of what needs to be let go and start edging toward what needs to be taken up. We will consider some different questions as we go along.

Today, thinking of that gospel, Luke's account of the transfiguration of Jesus the Christ on a mountain, Peter, James, and John saw Jesus with Moses and Elijah. Peter, James, and John *saw* Jesus in a different way. We could say they saw what had been there all along. And yet, when they saw it, he was transfigured in their sight. Jesus the Christ is transfigured.

We ourselves as we walk in his company and that of one another are being transformed, changed from one thing into another. Transformation for us from one thing into another, from glory to glory as both today's collect and the second reading from Second Corinthians say.

We have taken a very practical approach to transformation. You can consider it a metaphor as well as an offering. Yesterday's ABC sale was a tremendous success, raising, as of service time, hold on, \$7,038.00. Every penny is going to a place in Haiti called Bondeau, and you are going to hear more about that momentarily.

We have, if you will, with God's help, transformed a bunch of stuff we all needed to let go because it no longer served us, and have transformed it by God's grace into something mighty useful—over \$7,000 so far—which will make a big difference for some people in a place that is no farther away from here than is the city of Miami but whose lives in that place are quite different.

Luke's account says Peter, James, and John were weighed down with sleep. What are you weighed down with? What else besides all that furniture we liquidated yesterday are we weighed down with? Stuff that no longer serves. Stuff we need to let go. And, leading to the next question: What do we need to take up?

On that first Sunday of the one hundred days, the Great 100 Days, Transfiguration Sunday, it was the custom that from that day until Maundy Thursday, the bishop—who was local at that time, basically, the rector or the pastor of the congregation in that place—the bishop would lay down their crozier, their crook, the sign of their authority, and join the congregation, discerning together for those 40-some days. Today we begin that together.

I am inviting my dear friend, the Reverend Sam Owen, to come and tell you about something we might take up even further than an ABC sale. And I am going to follow the example of our Christian forebears on this first day of the Great 100 Days and take my seat among you to hear from him.