

FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION Matthew 17:1-9 Mt. Calvary, West View / Pentecost,
Avella 02/26/17

Theme: Alpha and Omega

+ Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. AMEN +

Our Text is taken from the Gospel of Saint Matthew, the 17th chapter:

A voice from the cloud said, "This is My Beloved Son, with Whom I Am well pleased; listen to Him."

We have reached a border, but not like the border of Mexico and the U.S. This is more like the blue line in hockey. When you are watching the game, when does the offensive zone begin, and where does the defensive zone end? It is that 1 foot wide directionless line, for it depends on which direction the puck is going and who is the last possession of it that determines whether it is an offensive violation of offsides, or a proper clearing of the puck "out of the zone." Today, as we celebrate the Feast of the Transfiguration, our direction is much like that. We have reached the border between Epiphany and Lent. Is today the ending of the revelation of Jesus Christ as the Son of God as we celebrated for the last seven Sundays as the season of Epiphany, or is today the beginning of Jesus descending to Jerusalem, to go to the cross, so now we should be recognizing our sins as we do in the season of Lent? Is today the beginning of Lent or the ending of Epiphany?

Jesus called Himself, the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. Where does the beginning end with Jesus, that we can now say the end has started? Does today begin the Omega Man, or does it end the Alpha Dog? Certainly, it depends on the direction you wish to head this day. For in the beginning of our text, we observe Jesus going to the top of the unnamed Mount destination – and where is unimportant. This mount is no more significant than any other mount just because Jesus is transfigured here. It is not the place that is

important, it is the transfiguration, as God Himself will testify. Here, Matthew informs us simply that Jesus is transfigured before the selected disciples. Then appears Moses and Elijah, the Old Testament prophets of old that brought the people out of captivity through Moses, and the prophet that rebuked the people to follow the One True God and ascended into heaven without the pain of death to surround him in Elijah. With these here, we see the border lines between the Old deliverance of exodus from the slavery and oppression, and the new deliverance through ascension from this world to the next. But which is Jesus following here? Is He delivering from slavery, or ascending to the Heavens?

Indeed, He is doing both. As He goes to the cross He will save His people from their sins, and on the third day, He will rise from the grave, and in 40 days after, will ascend to the mighty hand of God the Father and judge His people justly. So then, we must be ending Epiphany, right? No longer will Jesus be trying to reveal Himself as the Son of God, but will be journeying on to save us from our sins! Well, wait a minute. As Jesus is being brought to the trial for His crimes, He is to be accused not of saving the people from their sins, but for calling Himself the Son of God. So really, Jesus is using this time to explain His divinity, so we are beginning the end of Epiphany, yes?

Peter wanted to build monuments to this Epiphany of Jesus as the Son of God and so suggested booths to be erected to keep the instruction going that here Jesus revealed Himself as the Son of God in a miraculous and unequivocal way. Yet, God the Father Himself intervenes to explain the site is unimportant, the message is what we need, and the message needs to go out to the world, not the world coming to it, so Peter, stop trying to keep Jesus and God Himself confined, and listen to Him! We are ending the Revelation, time to witness the Man of Sorrows descent. So we are starting Lent, yes? However, Jesus tells them not to say anything until He

rises from the dead, which is when we can reveal yet again His divinity that death has no mastery over Him as the Son of God, so it really is about Epiphany, no? I think I am getting a headache.

The reality is that Jesus is the Alpha AND the Omega. He has been since the beginning, the WORD that spoke and created the world, and at the end of time He will still be here. He is both and. Today we witness the end of Epiphany but that is not the end of the witness as Jesus as the Son of God. We start the journey to the cross, yet this journey was the purpose of His virgin birth. He has always been journeying to the cross to save. As Peter says, these are not cleverly invented stories and myths concerning Jesus the Christ, but are the witness that reveals to the Word the One True God Who came to save His people from the slavery of sin and bring them to Himself in heaven. Moses delivered the Hebrew people, Jesus delivers every created being. Elijah ascended by himself; Jesus will bring His faithful believers in His work of Salvation to Himself in heaven. You who have witness these merits of Christ through the works of the Holy Ghost in you through your baptism and your reception of the very body and blood have crossed the border from death to life and now have the comfort and peace that comes from the salvation won at the cross. And though the chosen few disciples were told to keep silent, we do not, for the Savior has risen, He has risen indeed, and will give His faithful their white robe washed in the blood of the Lamb.

Yes, we are ending Epiphany, but not the revelation of Jesus as the Son of God Who takes away the sin of the World. We are beginning Lent but not forgetting the Resurrection that comes from faith in Him as the God of the living. We can continue the message that Jesus saves through His blood that washes away every sin, and restores the believer to new life in Him. A whole wide world awaits this message, for they are truly lost without it. We neither begin nor end our message, for it is the message we always had, and a message we will always live. In His most Holy Name we pray. **AMEN.**

+ AND NOW MAY THE PEACE OF GOD WHICH SURPASSES ALL UNDERSTANDING
KEEP YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS IN UNION WITH CHRIST JESUS. AMEN+

Offering / Prayers

There are only two days on my calendar...today and the day of judgment