



**A Sermon preached in Christ Church, Grosse Pointe, Michigan  
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**Transfiguration Sunday  
3 August, 2025**

*In the Name of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.*

We know the story of the Transfiguration pretty well. Jesus, Peter, John and James go up a mountain and before the disciple's eyes Jesus Divine nature is revealed and Moses and Elijah appear alongside him. The disciples are charged up and want to stay on the mountaintop and make it last.

In the days and weeks leading up to this moment Jesus had called the disciples and, in their presence, has taught using stories and parables, healed the sick and the lame and then invested them with the power to go and do likewise in his name, which they did. Imagine what waking up each morning must have felt like. Imagine yourself in their place. Up until recently you got up each day, took care of your family, got dressed and drove to work. The daily grind.

But then this guy shows up and compels you to set everything down and join him. Imagine that you do and now when you wake up each day your question is not so much what do I have to do today, but what is Jesus going to do today, and eventually, what am I going to *get* to do today that has makes use of the gifts that have been given to me. Suddenly, your life takes on a new meaning that was impossible to imagine before when you caught your daily quota of fish, or whatever the 21st century equivalent is. Some necessary but temporary work that gets you from today, to tomorrow, 365 days a year until you, hopefully, accumulate a large enough pile of fish to set down your nets and, you guessed it, eat fish until the end.

The disciples must have woke up each day and for the briefest of moments before their brains were all the way on, imagined that the day was going to be just another ordinary day. But, once fully awake, they would remember that they had become followers of Jesus, wondering about the previous day's miracles, still trying to suss out the meaning of a parable.

Do you imagine on this particular day, when Jesus calls out Peter, John, and James to follow him up the mountain, the others felt a little relief? As humans, wouldn't we love to not have to experience each shattering paradigm shifting events on a daily basis, no matter how wonderful or miraculous they may be? I imagine, despite every other thing they had seen and done, nothing prepared those three men for a direct unveiled encounter with the Divine. And their response? This: I want more of this. So do I, guys, so do I.

When I was a kid I was uncomfortable with certain kinds of Christians that always seemed happy all the time. We referred to them as the happy clappy Christians, which I now feel ashamed to admit. It



did not seem genuine to me that there could be people who went through life expecting mountain top moments, not just for themselves, but for the world. Now, I was ok with forms of esoteric Christianity where if you worked hard enough at your prayer life you could expect moments of enlightenment and peace: Be more disciplined, pray harder, and you will encounter Christ. The issue with this understanding of the Christian life is that it is not open to all believers. Not all people can build perfect little lives for themselves or construct the kinds of lives where they control their encounter with the Divine.

The Christian life is not about the me in each one of us experiencing our own personal Jesus, it is about the you in each one of us, encountering the Divine in one another, something which we cannot do alone, something that we need Church for in our daily lives. And when we have turned our eyes upon Jesus, looking him full in the face of our neighbor, chance encounters with the Divine make themselves known to us. Not all the time, but often enough that we no longer see our lives as humdrum but filled with possibility and joy.

In order to lead the Christian life, we need one another. We cannot do it alone. Those whose gift it is to live as a Christian Solitary are few and far between, and if you read their writings you learn that they encounter Christ outside themselves too.

Today we are going to baptize little Gianna Martin. We will all stand as witnesses to this event during which we proclaim her as one of Christ's own forever, a gentle but powerful mountaintop moment. We will make promises to help her, and her family grow in faith, to be here for her, to continue being here for one another.

As members of the body of Christ we say yes to chance encounters with the Divine. Moments that we wish could last forever.