

Picture the scene; a man wearing a black suit and bowler hat, leaves his house at 52 Festive Road, he then walks down the road to visit a fancy-dress costume shop where he is invited by the moustache and , fez-wearing, large shopkeeper to try on a particular outfit. The bowler hat wearing man goes into the changing room and is transformed into wearing the new outfit and he leaves the back of the changing room through a different door and enters a world appropriate to his costume, so if he is wearing a cowboy costume he might then enter the wild west or if he's wearing a space man outfit he might walk out onto a different planet.

It is only then that the man's adventures really begins, an adventure which usually also contains some sort of moral teaching. Before long the fez wearing shopkeeper reappears to lead him back to the changing room, and the story comes to an end. The bowler hat wearing man returns' then to his normal everyday life, but is always left with a small souvenir of his magical adventure his amazing experience.

Now this story is a story which as a boy I was completely captivated by as I watched of course the cartoon series Mr Ben. As a small boy I watched with wonder the tv

series and saw him go in to the changing room in his suit and bowler hat and before my eyes he changed into something completely different. It was still Mr Ben but his life was transformed.

Now as some of you might expect having got to know me a little bit now over the past year, I of course wanted to recreate this fantastic story. So I would get dressed in my boring grey school inform and go into the cupboard in my bedroom and in the very small space I would change into one of my play costumes, be it my spiderman outfit, or my police man's uniform. I would then jump out of the cupboard ready for the adventure in front of me. My only viewer of this amazing transformation would be our family jack russell dog who when I stepped out with gusto from cupboard always would get very excited and start barking and tried to run away, she did this probably knowing that whatever adventure I would be embarking upon would also involve her as my trusty side kick.

Now Mr Ben's transformation in the cartoon series written by David Mckee and my own transformation in my cupboard only has real impact if someone or something else saw them. The story is only fully understandable if someone sees the transformation.

In our Gospel reading this morning the transfiguration of Jesus on the mountainside is probably as strange and as mysterious a scene as there is in the Gospels. Even without the voice from the cloud to explain it, “this is my son, listen to him,” those who were present and saw Jesus’ transformation had probably no doubt what they were witnessing.

It was the same Jesus of Nazareth all right, the man they'd walked alongside many miles, whose mum and dad and brothers they knew, the one they'd seen with them at times being hungry, at times being tired. But this man who stands in front of them was also the Messiah, the Christ, in his glory.

So in the transfiguration it could almost be thought of as Jesus’ holiness, his divine nature, shining through his humanness, his face and his clothes so afire with it those who saw it were almost blinded.

The transfiguration then is not then some theoretical, academic event, but is a reality and it’s this that I would suggest we might want to reflect upon, so that rather than seeing the transfiguration as something that doesn’t

have anything to do with us, as some distant and remote event it is has a definite reality for us in our lives.

Of seeing the divine reality of Christ in each other, of seeing the divine reality of Christ in the stranger of those who we are yet to know. In doing this we may then transfigure, may transform our understanding of all being made in the image of God.

If we believe as we are told, that we are made in the image of God then this radiant glow of the divine, like the radiant glow a heavily pregnant woman might have, is to be made visible in our lives.

It is this shining holiness that is revealed in and through the transfiguration and it is this radiance that we experience as we grow closer in our relationship with God.

Just like when we move our hand closer and closer to the flame of a candle the glow upon our hands gets larger and larger.

In our second hymn this morning we sang of; How awesome is the sight, our radiant King of light!

And in a few moments time during our offertory hymn in the final verse we sing almost like a prayer together;

O Christ, whom now beneath a veil we see,
May what we thirst for
Soon our portion be:
To gaze on thee unveiled,
And see thy face,
The vision of thy glory and thy grace.

These beautiful words penned by Thomas Aquinas way back in the 13th century speak I would suggest as profoundly to us today about the transfiguration as they did when they first were heard,

At the transfiguration then the veil of Gods glory is lifted and we get a glimpse, a glimpse of the holiness and divinity of Jesus, which of course then prefigures what happens to him in and through his resurrection and his ascension.

So for us today we see through the eyes of Peter, James and John the transfiguration and we are alongside them looking upwards on the mountainside towards the beauty of the divine. But just as they went back down the mountainside into their everyday lives and alongside them Jesus walked, we too, I would suggest, are encouraged to not only take the holiness and divine which was present in

and through Jesus with us in all of our encounters with others, but also share the radiance of Gods glory which is shining all around.