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Christ Church West Wimbledon  
Sermon : 8th Sunday after Trinity, *The Transfiguration*  
August 6th, 2017

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A few weeks ago, I and some friends and their families decided to go to Box Hill for a picnic. It was a beautiful day – but, as many of you will have seen from the cycling events, Box Hill is quite a climb – and we were walking! ‘Keep on climbing – the view is worth it’ – was how the adults kept trying to encourage their offspring of varying ages. How often those words will be heard amongst those holidaying, particularly by well meaning adults to their reluctant children. Initially, everyone was enthusiastic and thought it would be easy – but it wasn’t – it was quite hard work. But then when we got to the top – well, even the most reluctant teenager in the party had to admit that the view all around was simply stunning and they soon forgot the energy it took to climb up the hill – such was the magnificent view all around us. Eventually of course we had to make our way down the hill – but I don’t think we easily forgot what we had seen.

In the story of the Transfiguration of Jesus on the mountaintop – and you really get the sense of it all if you travel up Mount Tabor, the acknowledged site of the Transfiguration – the chosen disciples get a glimpse of the glory of God as revealed in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, the man who called them to follow. God’s glory makes the face of Jesus radiant as he prays on the mountain, showing us that our lives, too, can become increasingly radiant as the Spirit transforms us. The disciples were so concerned by all the small details of their lives that they couldn’t see the bigger picture. We all need to step back and see the bigger picture. An artist creating a painting has to frequently step back to see the whole canvas. You are hard at work weeding a flower bed or pruning a shrub – but you only get the real benefit when you step back and admire the whole garden. You are decorating a room – you need

to step back to see what you have achieved. It is why people go away on retreat – they retreat for a few days in order that they can advance.

On the mountaintop, the three friends of Jesus saw him not just with a radiant face but completely shining or transfigured. What they were seeing was the glory of God in Jesus, who was and is completely at one with God, his Father. They heard God's voice explaining who Jesus was and telling them to listen to him.

When we live our lives close to Jesus of Nazareth like this, listening to his quiet voice guiding us, talking over our problems and happiness with him, and working at living a good life – it is then that gradually our faces will start to show some of God's glory, and our lives will start to shine, reflecting God's loving nature like mirrors reflecting the light. May that be so for each one of us here today?

*God of glory and unquenchable Spirit, may your Son direct us afresh to the fire of your presence*

*where nothing may amaze us more than your love, nothing may inspire us more than your forgiveness and nothing may dazzle us more than your beauty, disclosed to us in your world, your story and your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*