Grace and peace are yours from God our Father and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, amen.

Epiphany ends today with a grand and glorious image of Jesus transfigured before the disciples: Peter, James, and John. In the context of Epiphany, this is the ultimate means in which Christ is made known as His holiness is revealed to humankind. A little reference and context to today’s message and words; Jesus is transfigured before the disciples and is seen with Moses and Elijah. Moses is the voice of God that gives the Law and Elijah is the voice of God that gives the prophecy of a coming Kingdom. Jesus standing with the Law and Prophets fulfills all things with love and complete obedience to God Almighty.

There is more than meets the eye (or ear) in the passage from our gospel, and more when combined with the reading from our Old Testament. The reading from Kings is the narrative of power and authority being transferred from Elijah to Elisha by God when Elijah is taken up to heaven. All power in heaven and earth is given to Jesus when He too is taken up into heaven; when all on earth has been completed. Jesus uses these very words when He meets with His disciples after the resurrection and at the time when He sends them into the world to make disciples of all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

In the gospel reading, Jesus is transfigured before the disciples who witness this event. The question to consider is who changed? Did Jesus change in His appearance for the sake of the disciples and their faith; or were the disciples changed to see the true appearance of Jesus. We shared last week the complete humanity and divinity of Jesus in our midst. Jesus is conformed to flesh and blood and limited to the boundaries of the human condition. This is essential for our faith and understanding in knowing that Jesus’s strength, power, and endurance to remain obedient unto death came from God alone.

Our Epistle speaks of the truth of the gospel being ‘veiled’ from those who are perishing, or those who have not had their Epiphany. We also hear the word of Jesus when He tells us, “we see in a mirror see dimly, but then face to face.” The eyes of the disciples are opened, the veil is removed, and they do indeed see Jesus, face to face. And they see the clothes of Jesus dazzling white, like no one could bleach. There is no word in the original text of the bible for bleach and the literal translation is “no fuller could whiten.” A fuller is one who worked in the production of cloth from the wool; specifically, to clean, remove dirt and soil, and to whiten.

Words that are missing from the original text (in the translation we use today) are ‘white as snow’. This becomes important when we consider that the word snow (chee-on) is used only three times in Scripture; twice in the gospels that record the transfiguration and once is Revelation to describe the appearance of Christ. Why the lesson in Greek? Because the eyes of the disciples were opened to see the true, holy, and righteous appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ; the very same way we will see Him. The day is coming when our eyes will be opened and we will not see dimly anymore, but clearly see our Lord; face to face.

God does not change; God changes people. Jesus did not change; Jesus changed the lives of people to become the children of God and brothers and sisters in Christ. We look to the transfiguration and celebrate this event as the ultimate Epiphany now and to come. In as much as we shared the word snow in Greek only appears three times, the word transfigure is also two other times and in a most wonderful and exceptional way.

One of the two usages of transfigure is aligned to the passage where, ‘we see in a mirror dimly now, but then face to face.” Paul tells us that what we see in the mirror, the glory of the Lord, will change us into the same image; from glory to glory. (2 Cor. 3:18) Our hope and faith in Christ reveals that we will be transfigured also. John’s Epistle reassures us of this hope and reality as he declares; “when He is revealed, we will be like Him; for we will see Him as He is.”

My dear friends in Christ, this is what God declared to the heavens and earth when humankind was created on the sixth and final day of creation; “Let us make humankind in our own image.” What God has said is come to fulfillment, it witnessed, and promised. Our Lord is transfigured; the eyes of the disciples are opened to see the Lord, to see without sin, to provide us with an image of what we will be transfigured to.

Our message closes today with the final usage of the word transfigure in Paul’s letter to the Romans. He states, don’t conform to this world, rather renew your mind and be transformed to reveal what is the good, acceptable, and perfect, will of God. Look at the world around you, not in the context of sin, deceit, war, injustice, and so on… rather know who you are before God and see the children of God who are waiting for the day when the veil will be lifted from their eyes, and they too will see the Lord face to face.

Our Lord’s ministry here on earth begins with a baptism where the heavens open and God declares, “This is my Son, the Beloved; with whom I am well pleased.” As Jesus’s ministry on earth comes to a close, after all healings, miracles, and messages, God again reveals Jesus as His Beloved Son and tells us to listen to Him! Nothing has changed with God or Jesus during the time of ministry, and nothing will change in the days leading up to our Lord’s death. Nothing has changed since God made us in His image. On the Mount of Transfiguration, God reveals His image to us and what our image is before Him.

Epiphany comes to a close as we enter into the forty days of Lent. The time between the Transfiguration to the Passion is: forty days. As we enter Lent, remember the image our Lord revealed to the disciples and the promise of our image; the image of all people before God because of His love for us through Christ our Lord. Enter Lent knowing our eyes will be opened and the veil will be removed to see our Lord and our peace that passes all understanding to keep our hearts and minds through Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord. Amen.