

Address given by Mrs Sarah French at Holy Trinity Church on Sunday 2nd March 2025 at 10h30

Transforming Hope: Transfiguration and Transformation

Introduction

The transfiguration of Jesus, as recorded in the Gospels, reveals divine glory shining through Him, offering a vision of hope and transformation. This transformation is not only personal but encompasses all creation. The transfiguration serves as a bridge between past promises and future fulfilment, demonstrating that the light of Christ's glory brings renewal to all things. Today, as we explore **Revelation 22, Luke 9, and Genesis 2**, we reflect on how this transforming hope calls us to care for creation and take environmental action.

These Bible passages invite us to reflect on profound themes of transformation and new beginnings. They provide rich insights into how divine encounters can lead to significant changes in our lives and our understanding of our purpose in the world.

The transfiguration is one of those moments when the glory of God breaks through into life. **Rowan Williams** writes in a reflection on an icon of the transfiguration that *"looking at Jesus seriously changes things; if we do not want to be changed, it is better not to look too hard or too long."* These powerful words remind us that encounters with Christ require a response—His light calls us to transformation.

Glimpses of transfiguration—in nature's mystery and beauty, in human lives, and, most fully, in the person and life of Jesus Christ—point us to hope and give us the strength to continue striving for justice and the restoration of God's creation.

Specifically, in a world which is struggling to hold onto hope for nature, the environment, creation – where daily we see standards being dropped compromised trampled- the **idea of transfiguration and transformation** can help us rekindle **HOPE**, to hold on, keep going: God is at work renewing and recreating and we all still have a role to play as part of that work

Let's have a closer look at the bible passages – firstly at the epistle reading about

The Transfiguration: A Revelation of Transforming HOPE

The transfiguration of Jesus on the mountain was a moment of divine revelation, where His true glory was unveiled before His disciples. This event was not just for their encouragement but a glimpse of the ultimate transformation that awaits all creation. **HOPE** Just as Jesus was transfigured before Peter, James, and John, we are called to be transformed—both spiritually and in our relationship with the world around us.

The dazzling light of Christ points to a future where all things will be renewed. In this way, the transfiguration is not just an isolated event but a foretaste of God's redemptive work in the world. **It gives us HOPE that the brokenness we see—environmental destruction, climate crisis, and human neglect of creation—can be restored through God's power and our faithful participation.**

We see in Genesis 2: A World Given Life (Genesis 2:4-9)

We are presented with a deeply intimate image of creation, where God forms humanity from the dust of the earth and breathes into them the breath of life. This passage highlights the

interconnectedness of human life with the earth itself. The garden described in Genesis is a place of beauty, provision, and harmony, emphasizing the divine intention for a flourishing world.

This account reminds us that our existence is bound up with the land and the life it sustains. The image of the *tree of life* in Genesis 2 also foreshadows the *tree of life* in Revelation 22, linking the beginning and the fulfilment of God's purposes and is a symbol of **HOPE**. **The call to care for this world is deeply rooted in our identity as part of God's creation.**

We see in Revelation 22: A Vision of Restored Creation

Revelation 22 paints a picture of a renewed world where the *river of life* flows, the *tree of life* flourishes, and healing extends to all nations. This vision echoes the Garden of Eden in Genesis, reminding us that God's ultimate plan is not just individual salvation but the renewal of all creation. **The passage reminds us that environmental care is not an afterthought—it is central to God's redemptive work.**

In the face of **climate change, deforestation, and pollution**, we are called to align our actions with this divine vision. **Our response reflects our faith in God's promise of restoration.**

We are called to Environmental Action: Living Out Transforming Hope

Hope motivates, inspires, and grounds us in purpose and action. It fosters confidence, resilience, and the commitment to pursue bold, sustainable change. Hope in the Christian tradition is not passive—it is active and transformative. The transfiguration of Jesus was not just a moment of divine glory but a revelation of God's power to change lives and the world. This transformation inspires us to take action in our own lives and in the way we care for creation to live in **HOPE**, to act in **HOPE**.

It is easy to lose hope

- we need to nurture and cling on to hope as community, as individuals
- we need to make **small concrete changes** which shift what is 'normal' and strike a blow against those who want to erode progress on environment. **The power of small** cannot be underestimated.

Last year, a small group from Holy Trinity gathered to discuss advocacy and campaigning. We examined how plastic has become synonymous with convenience, infiltrating nearly every aspect of our lives. We explored the impacts of plastic pollution on the environment, health, and human well-being. We live in the "plastic age," where plastic production—from oil and gas extraction to refining and incineration—releases greenhouse gases and toxic pollutants, exacerbating environmental crises such as climate change and biodiversity loss.

This issue is particularly urgent as major oil and gas companies reduce investments in renewable energy and plan to increase fossil fuel production.

(At present, every minute, the equivalent of a garbage truck full of plastic waste is dumped into the ocean. Microplastics are being found in human blood, lungs, and even in unborn fetuses, raising concerns about long-term health impacts.)

This week the largest known contributor of branded plastic wasteⁱ just downgraded their recyclable material target. (50% to 34% - 40%) **YOU** cannot recycle your way out of 125 billion that is 125 and 9 **000 000 000** s bottles a year !.

So how can we make a difference: foster meaningful hope and catalyse transformative action.

I find that a **Head, Heart, and Hands** approach works here

When you learn, understand, know more by exploring, open your eyes to what is going on in the world around you, you engage **your Head**,

Then with knowledge, by engaging your faith, **you CARE and engage your Heart.**

And finally, you can do something, making small But Powerful Changes When Everything Feels Too Much. **You engage in action with your HANDS.**

HEAD HEART HANDS.

A useful approach to fostering this transformation is through **developing "green muscle memory"**—eco-friendly habits cultivated through consistent, repetitive actions.

You will have heard of muscle memory - Do you remember learning to ride a bicycle or playing an instrument ... what it took, tumbles, hours of daily practice, instruction and guidance. With time and practice, these actions can be performed almost **automatically** because of the strength of the specific connection we have made in our brains. **So, through repetition and practice, it becomes second nature.**

So "green muscle memory" is green eco-friendly habits cultivated through consistent, repetitive actions. You don't think twice about choosing a glass bottle over a plastic one, composting, taking a bus or train over driving the car ... *The 5 Rs are helpful here too and should be considered prior to 'recycling': refuse, reduce, reuse, repurpose, and then recycle.*

This mindset empowers us to become agents of change, making environmentally friendly choices instinctively.

In response to the discussions on advocacy and campaigning, Holy Trinity Church took up the challenge of **Plastic-Free February**.

Last week, Daphne asked you to consider two questions:

1. What is one thing we could do in our daily lives to reduce plastic use?

To do these small actions is about looking into habits - habits which help transform and which build **HOPE**. Be bold take sustainable steps for nature and people.

Here are some practical actions we can take:

- ✓ **Clean up plastic waste** from a beach or park.
- ✓ **Avoid** products containing microplastics- check toothpaste, makeup
- ✓ **Check clothing labels** for plastic content.
- ✓ **Install a filter** on washing machines to trap microplastic fibres.
- ✓ **Reduce single-use plastics** and excessive packaging.
- ✓ **Encourage governments and businesses** to act—use your vote, voice, and purchasing power.

2. What is one thing we could do as a church to minimize plastic consumption?

- ✓ **Plastic Free February – make it a fixture, plan ahead**
 - ✓ **Continue thinking what you can do together**
- To conclude with a Faithful Response to Creation's Cry**

Pope Francis has some helpful words that I share with you.

*"Authentic faith not only gives strength to the human heart, but also **transforms** life, **transfigures** our goals, and sheds light on our relationship to others and with creation as a whole."* — (Pope Francis, *Laudate Deum*)

Through **HOPE**, faith, and action, we can work towards a world where creation is cherished and renewed in alignment with God's vision for restoration.

HOPE is not the end of the story. We are also called to action. Pope Francis tells us that the Holy Spirit "keeps the believing community alert and continually instructs them, calls them to conversion in lifestyles, to resist human degradation of the environment." Believing in a better future means taking action to bring it to life.

With transfiguration, transformation; Despite all the discouragement, God is at work renewing, and our role is to be part of that renewal making a difference holding on to HOPE and sowing seeds of HOPE for the future.

- Luke 9.28-36 Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, 'Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah'—not knowing what he said. While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. Then from the cloud came a voice that said, 'This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!' When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and, in those days, told no one any of the things they had seen.
- Revelation 22:1-6 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. Nothing accursed will be found there anymore. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign for ever and ever.
And he said to me, 'These words are trustworthy and true, for the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place.'
- Genesis 2:4-9 These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up—for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground; but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground— then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being. And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

ⁱ 56 brands led by The Coca-Cola Company responsible for more than half of the [plastic](#) pollution found across the globe