

## Reflection for February 15, 2026 – *Transformation Into Healing* Inspired by Matthew 17:1-9

It has been a remarkably sad week in British Columbia. The events that unfolded with the shooting deaths in Tumbler Ridge, has torn apart a quiet town in the north-eastern part of the province. Families have been devastated, residents numbed with the shock of an unthinkable tragedy. Seven young lives and one adult perished. Two more young people fight for their lives in hospital beds. Fraught with too many demons, the shooter herself took her own life. There were a reported twenty-five others injured.

There is no possible way of making any sense of this horrific, heartbreaking event. There are no words one can say that can possibly soften the grief or relieve the pain. Condolences and hugs help, but the pain is unbearable. Will the affected families ever recover from this terrible tragedy? Will the community of Tumbler Ridge ever heal?

For those gathered in Sunday Worship like we are, surely the question, “God where are you in all this,” is being raised. “How can God let this happen will be words shared among many.” I wondered if the transfiguration of Jesus in today’s Gospel account could give us any perspective.

If I recall correctly, the first time I spoke about Jesus’ transfiguration experience was to children in story time. How am I going to make sense out of this event for young folks I wondered? Well, I had one of those transformer toys with me. I think it was a car. As we sat together at the front of the sanctuary, I changed the car into a robotic figure and then back again. Jesus’ appearance changed I said. There were several quizzical looks. (I wonder now if, after the service, several kids told their moms and dads that Jesus was a robot). I don’t think I really explained the story very well then.

The next time I told the story I thought of something else. I had one youth at worship that day. I had rigged up a floodlight near one of the pews in the front. I said, I wonder what it must have been like for Jesus being in such a powerful light. I asked her to step up on the pew and I turned on the floodlight. The young girl stood there with the biggest smile on her face, which was glowing from the flood lamp. She just stood there and didn’t say anything. We were all amazed, and that was the sermon in a nutshell. She was showing us what it would be like to be bathed in Holy Light. It was beautiful and inspiring.

I imagine I have made reference to one of my favourite Christmas Stories in a worship reflection before, but I can’t help repeating it, because it makes me think about Jesus’ transfiguration. I see the Grinch with his green grinchy feet in the snow feeling absolutely retched because he couldn’t stop Christmas from coming. Suddenly the heavens open up and the bright sun comes out. He is zapped with an incredible bolt of light, and he falls down. What is happening to me he asks? “I’m all toasty inside and I’m leaking,” says the Grinch, as he sheds tears of joy. And his heart, as we know, grew three sizes. His transfiguration led to a great transformation.

Did the hearts of Peter, James and John grow exponentially on that mountain with Jesus? Did they fill with hope for a better world? Did they “see” the messiah in a new light, affirming their faith in discipleship? What did they feel other than fear when God spoke, ***“This is my Son, the Beloved;<sup>[b]</sup> with him I am well pleased; listen to him!”***

I see the transfiguration event as a reminder of God’s transformative power through Holy Love. For the disciples, a reminder that Holy Wisdom affirms the man Jesus as an emissary for spreading the good news to the world. Peter, James and John, after getting over their fear, fully understand Jesus was indeed the way, the truth and the light. Once they got over their individual trepidation, they were changed, they were transformed. If there had been any doubt about their ministry calling and Jesus’ authenticity, that vanished as quickly as the light bathing the messiah.

Listen to him offers powerfully transformative words.

**Listen to him.** Through the power of love, sight can be returned to the blind, it becomes possible for the deaf to hear again and for the lame to walk. The power of love can restore hope. The power of love can even transform death into new life. It seems to me that is what we often pray for. We are praying for it now.

We are praying for love to break down the doors of hopelessness and despair in the community of Tumbler Ridge. We are praying that with time, anger, doubt, fear and pain will be diminished and healing may begin. We pray the agony of grief will some-day become tolerable. **The gift of Holy Love can do that.**

A number of years ago in my infancy of my faith enquiries I asked my Diaconal Mentor “Where is God when tragedy happens?” It is I expect akin to saying, “How can God allow terrible things to happen?” How is it that wars continue to prevail, that innocent men, women and children die needlessly every day? How is it that natural disasters make so many suffer? How is it that there are the desperate, so many unfed, unloved or living on the streets? How is it God that there are horrid, unimarginably painful events like the one that just happened in Tumbler Ridge?

My mentor replied to me, “I an those are the times when God was not present.”

I have learned that either by design or through chance, tragedy lands and inflicts crushing blows to the human spirit. I have also learned that there is no salve that can be applied to make things better. You all know that as well. And you know that while we want there to be a fix when heartache occurs, one does not exist. This has nothing to do with God. But we might ask, where then does God, the Holy arrive?

The Holy is in Jesus’ mountaintop experience, and it gives me a great deal of hope. From within the blinding light came a voice that said, **“This is my Son, the Beloved;<sup>[6]</sup> with him I am well pleased; listen to him!”** Listen to Jesus, for he has much to offer this troubled and fractured world. The disciples heard it. God’s voice, Holy Love.

I hear that voice now, in this place. The Holy One says, “You are my disciples, my beloved, with you I am well pleased.” And within that voice comes a great hope, a hope that we would allow ourselves to be transformed too, changed into believing that death and destruction do not have the last say. Convinced that love, kindness, and generosity offer pathways to healing. Assured in our determination to see that justice prevails. That voice is a transformational one, and we are its agents.

We are its agents, offering transformation through trauma, to healing for those in our Community of Faith and our communities who need assurance that there are compassionate, caring people holding them prayerfully. We are agents of God’s love holding all those affected by the Tumbler Ridge tragedy in our hearts. We cannot make their pain vanish, but we can walk tenderly with them and hopefully, eventually, and with God’s grace, help healing resolve heartache.

As we pray for the dead, grieving and traumatized at Tumbler Ridge and elsewhere, thank you for being agents of Jesus’ transforming love, that can bring healing into pain and suffering.

And thank you for listening this morning, Amen