

Of Trumpism and The Transfiguration of Our Lord

As they were coming down the mountain, [Jesus] ordered [Peter, James and John] to tell no one about what they had seen until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead. –Mark 9:9

Along with many millions, I spent as much time as I could watching the proceedings of the Senate impeachment trial. The defense appropriately, quickly, and clearly laid out the lines of their constitutional arguments, clearing the way for the House managers to lay out the details of their evidence. This decision indicates that the Senators are agreed that then-President Trump's words are indefensible in the context in which he uttered them. I hope and pray that the people of the United States will not lose sight of this unanimity among their leaders as the case continues to unfold.

Jesus's command to these three witnesses to his Transfiguration boldly underscores the importance of the context in which we bear witness to his glory. That context is the Resurrection. Only in the context of the Resurrection does the Transfiguration retain the clarity of the divine revelation of the nature of Christ. The Resurrection eliminates all adoptionistic views of the Transfiguration; the Resurrection demolishes all attempts to rationalize the Transfiguration by tight rhetoric or poetic figures; the Resurrection frustrates all reductions of the Transfiguration into science fiction, comparative religion, or political salvation. There is no Transfiguration for a President, the Transfiguration does not apply to other prophets, humanity is not transfigured by melding with the machine, the Transfiguration is not just an edifying story about the potential of humanity, the Transfiguration was not the turning point in Jesus' relationship with God. The Resurrection makes the Transfiguration an "Aha!" moment: we can testify with Peter (II Peter 1:16-18): "and we saw **his glory** on the mountain top!" With Aquinas we can give thanks because the glimpse of his **glory** helps us through the difficulties of bearing the cross. With Luther we can bow in worship when the glimpse of **his** glory assures us that Jesus alone is the saviour and Lord of all creation. Faith in the risen Christ enables us to share the glory of his Transfiguration.

We are going through a lot: as well as the impeachment trial, we are sorting through news about coronavirus variants, mixed messages about vaccine roll-out, dangerously cold weather, Black history month, and how to celebrate Valentine's Day. As we prepare to leave the season of Epiphany and begin the baptismal journey of Lent, I hope we can give Sunday morning over to the celebration of The Transfiguration of Our Lord. Let us pray that this glimpse of the glory of our Risen Lord will help us on the way of the cross through the pandemic. Let us long for the fullness of his glorious image to be completed in ourselves, our church, our world. Let us rejoice with worship and awe that this so very human Jesus gives us such an intimate moment with him in the glory of his divine nature. And let us testify with our lives of loving service and our careful and caring words in our contexts to the Glory of the Saviour of the world on the cross.

Amen