



**Last Sunday in Epiphany (C)**  
**Special Sermon: World Mission Sunday**

**The Power to Follow Jesus**  
**[RCL] Exodus 34:29-35; Psalm 99; 2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2; Luke 9:28-36, [37-43a]**

Luke, author of the Gospel that carries his name, is also a doctor and a historian. He puts a lot of emphasis on the details, the dates, and the events that connect Jesus with the history and with the people. In several accounts, interest has been raised in answering the question, “Who is this who forgives sins? Who is this who commands the winds and the waters and they obey him?” And this morning, he presents us with a story that amazes and challenges us, where from heaven comes the answer: “This is my chosen son; listen to him.”

It may be difficult to understand and then present the story of Jesus’ transformation into radiant light. But it is there where the power of his Spirit assists us to take us to the next level of committing ourselves with the power to follow Jesus.

It is not possible to read the account of the Transfiguration without making the connection with the account of the Baptism. What they both have in common is the voice that is heard from heaven, saying, “This is my son.” Here is the Epiphany, the revelation of the identity of Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, who is in the midst of the people, accompanying, teaching, performing miracles, but also calling and sending. Today is the Sunday dedicated to the World Mission and the need to re-imagine ourselves, as the Mission of God has a Church which serves in the midst of the reality of a pandemic. Canon Grace Kaiso, consultant to the Anglican Alliance, tells us, “For the Church, this time of the pandemic is an opportunity to listen to the voice of God: what is God telling us about the nature of his Kingdom and how God calls us to give an answer?” Here is the clear challenge of re-imagining ourselves as the Mission of God with a Church.

With this in mind, I would like to reflect with you on how we respond to the challenge of mission:

1. The incarnation of Jesus Christ and his manifestation; and
2. Transforming realities in a society that awaits him.

First, the mystery of the incarnation of Jesus Christ is the greatest initiative of love that God has made towards us. This is the essence of Christianity, the action of God in the history of a people – yesterday,

today, and forever. Our challenge is to present the Word God made man: Jesus Christ; and to present Jesus Christ to our world, just as it is: battered by climate change, with practices of discrimination and racism that still exist, with exclusion of people, with corruption of systems, but also with tenderness, with hope, with love. The challenge is to work together in the transformation of the world that God wants. In the story of the Transfiguration, Peter, perhaps thinks of the Feast of Tabernacles, where huts were made to commemorate the events of the Exodus, where God liberates the people from slavery in Egypt. Peter wanted to stay there with them and build a church on three cornerstones: the law, the prophets, and Jesus.

But then he discovered that that was not what God wanted. Peter would later write about Jesus, “Carefully chosen, precious cornerstone for the Church” (1 Peter 2:6). Peter, James, and John experienced a precious moment at the top of the mountain, and they did not want to leave that place. Sometimes, we also experience the same thing. We want to continue enjoying the moment and stay there, away from the challenges and frustrations that may come our way in daily life. However, staying on the mountain does not allow us to minister to the needs of others. It does not allow us to reveal to others, to manifest to others who Jesus Christ is. Knowing what awaits us in the valley, it motivates us to look for moments of retreat and renewal to strengthen ourselves and return to reality. The meaning of our faith is found at the top of the mountain and also in the depths of the valley. God in this story clearly identifies that Jesus is his Son, the chosen one, and tells Peter and the others that they must listen to him, not to their own ideas or their own desires. The power to follow Jesus comes from the security of knowing who he is.

Second, the God of Jesus Christ, the God of prophets, evangelists, and apostles, chooses messengers to be his hands, feet, and voice. We as pastors, preachers, and lay leaders in the community of faith have the task of communicating how God acts through his chosen one, to give us the most complete picture of his plans, in which we can commit ourselves and participate. It is here where the Anglican Communion, of which we are a part, through the Marks of Mission reminds us that the Mission of God has the Church:

- Proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God;
- Teach, baptize, and nurture new believers;
- Respond to human need through serving with love;
- Transform unjust structures in society, challenge violence of all kinds, and promote peace and reconciliation; and
- Safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew life on earth.

These marks become the mission plan of the Church. They are carried out from the community of faith and individually, because they represent the way of life that we live and reflect as disciples of Jesus Christ. Evangelism, intentional discipleship, social action, social justice, and ecological justice are the actions and ministries that, as messengers of Jesus Christ, we must communicate and reflect to transform society so that it resembles God’s plans. It is time to change the paradigm, from being a maintenance Church to being a Church that exercises the Mission of God.

Theologian C.S. Lewis said, “We cannot change the beginning... so let us work to change the end.” We are called to be the agents of transformation that we so desperately need as a community of *faith*, as a society, as citizens of the world. Perhaps the pandemic left us with many things, some negative, but it also left us positive marks and opportunities. Let’s take the day calmly, but let’s not stop. Don’t be afraid, but let’s be careful. Let us continue the journey, but don’t stop taking care of ourselves and taking care of others, reflecting and contributing to the construction of the life-giving project inaugurated by Jesus Christ: the Mission of the Kingdom of God. So be it. Amen.

*The Most Rev. Julio Murray is the primate of the Iglesia Anglicana de la Region Central de America (IARCA) and the bishop of Panama. To learn more about World Mission Sunday, visit [iam.ec/epiphany2022](http://iam.ec/epiphany2022).*