

## Mount of Transfiguration

Towards the end of Mark chapter 8, Peter confesses his belief that Jesus is the Christ but received a rebuke from Jesus when he challenged Jesus' comments that the

*'Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise . (Mk8:31)*

and these words:

*When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. (Mk8:34)*

We can only imagine the conversations taking place between the disciples.

Mark uses the word 'immediately' over 30 times, he was driven to keep the story moving but here there is a change. It is as if we are asked to pause and take stock; 'now after six days':

*'Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves' Mark 9:2*

This is how the Venetian artist (1490-1576) interpreted this Gospel event.



### **Titian's Transfiguration in the Venetian Church of San Salvador**

Tiziano Vecelli or  
Vecellio but  
generally known as  
Titian in English -  
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There are two possible sites for the Transfiguration.



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**Mt. Tabor** (above)

The 4<sup>th</sup> century Church Fathers and Scholars, Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem, and Jerome were among those who thought Mt Tabor was the site of the Transfiguration.

Eusebius, the 4th-century bishop of Caesarea, was uncertain whether Mt Tabor or Mt Hermon was the place of the Transfiguration.

Some early translation of Matthew 17:1 have the disciples go up a mountain 'apart' or 'by itself'. Mt. Tabor certainly does stand apart.

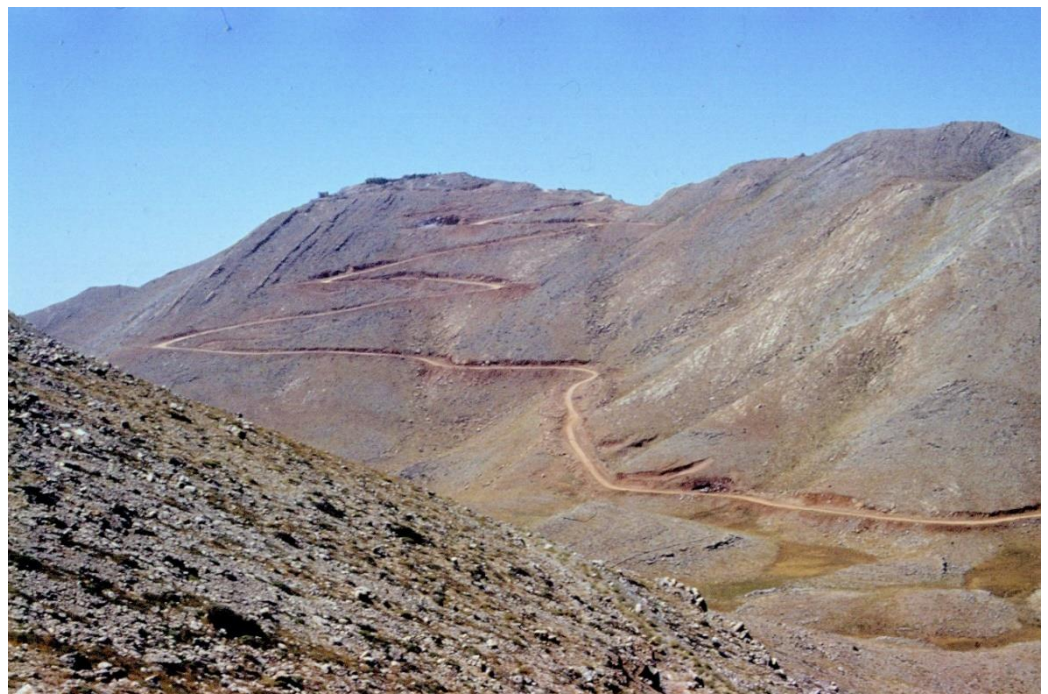
**Mt. Hermon** (below)

While Mt Hermon is not the traditional site for the Mount of Transfiguration. Mt. Hermon is close to Caesarea Philippi where Jesus was teaching prior to His Transfiguration.

Compared with Mt. Tabor Mt. Hermon is a high mountain, about 9000 feet above sea level.

Mt Hermon did provide a place where they could be by themselves. Another translation of Matthew 17:1. Mt Tabor was a far busier location.

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Of the two possible sites for the Transfiguration, I tend to agree with Bishop Eusebius, the 4th-century bishop of Caesarea, who was uncertain whether Mt Tabor or Mt Hermon was the place of the Transfiguration. On balance of probability, I am drawn to Mt. Hermon. It is in a mountain in range the general region of Caesarea Phillipi and a place where you could be away from the crowds.

It is a holy mountain and on a mountain something happens in the life of Christ, something of the divine occurs. The disciples and we too through the words of the Gospel writers catch a glimpse of the divine, God amongst us! It is a moment when the Light of Christ is literally shown to us, and we are not used to that. Our rational thinking perhaps wants to put that aside, explain it away and move on. But no! Let us not move on, let us pause and read St Luke's account of the Transfiguration, below.

## Time to pause

As always, I suggest you find your favourite space for this time of prayerful reflection.

Slow down, breath calmly, be comfortable and relax.

Light a candle, turn off your phone. Be ready to discover!

I invite you to imagine you are on the mountaintop and you witness the scene.

Notice the change in appearance, the brilliant light and the whiteness compared with the shadows of the mountain top.

Sense the light of Christ and listen to the words of Graham Kenrick's' Meekness and Majesty.



We listen to Graham Kenrick's Meekness and Majesty



<https://youtu.be/yW5NVGQi5LM?si=9JKEWTSpgvVYYggj&t=13>

We continue with a prayer of confession. We all miss the mark and Lent gives us an opportunity to become more aware of those times when we get things wrong, we miss the mark, we sin.

### **A prayer of confession as we begin the season of Lent.**

Forgive us Lord for our apathy, for our lack of courage to speak out.  
Lord have mercy.

Forgive us when we walk past and don't offer help.  
Christ have mercy

Forgive us when we get it wrong.  
Lord have mercy.

### **Hearing words of forgiveness.**

Lord, Your forgiveness is total  
there is no notebook, post-it notes to remind you of that moment when we missed  
the mark, sinned.

You take our confession offered with hands outstretched  
and gently like the loving heavenly Father that you are  
put it to one side to be forgotten.

No grudges, no itching for judgement  
No resentment or ill-will  
Not like us who find it easy to say sorry  
but so hard to forgive absolutely  
Forgive us, Father that we are often more willing  
to accept forgiveness than to forgive.

(John Birch - adapted from a version on the Worship Cloud)

Let us in our imagination go to a mountain and in the stillness let our thoughts  
become prayers.

*Jesus – took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. <sup>29</sup> As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening. <sup>30</sup> And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, <sup>31</sup> who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.*

*<sup>34</sup> . . . a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were fearful as they entered the cloud. <sup>35</sup> And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!" <sup>36</sup> When the voice had ceased, Jesus was found alone. (Luke 9:28-30,34-36)*

In the stillness of these moments let us bring our fallen world, broken relationships, and ourselves to the Lord.

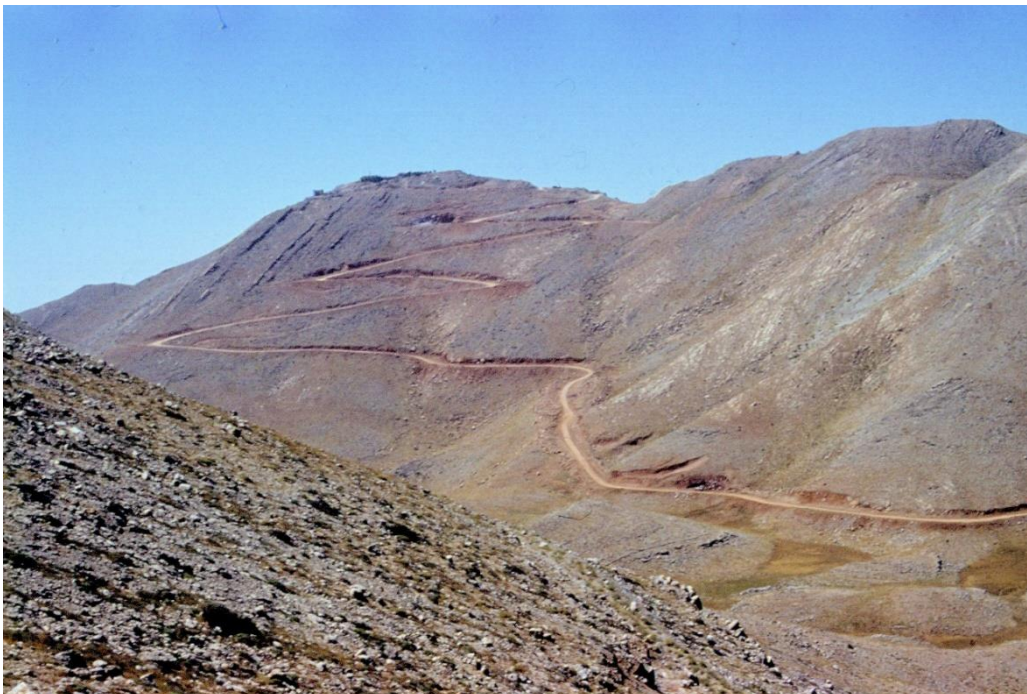
When asked about how to pray Jesus gave these simple but profound words, so let them be our prayer:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name;  
Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done;  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation;  
but deliver us from evil. Amen

Our closing hymn is All things bright and beautiful from the Chet Valley Churches.



<https://youtu.be/RCLGIpmoGZs?si=TKf-jjEf6yOiKM9-&t=2>



Lord, pour your Spirit upon us in a gracious, healing way. Make us agents of reconciliation as we live and may we bring a blessing to those we meet. Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Amen

Fr Derek Akker

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(Derek is a retired Anglican Parish Priest and a member of the congregations of All Saints & St James. Prior to his ordination he was accredited as a Methodist Preacher in 1968 and served within the Methodist Church until returning to the Anglican Church in the mid 1980's)

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\*The Transfiguration by the German Artist's Johann George Trautmann 1713-1769 – Public Domain