

THE SUNDAY PAPER

Year B

LAST SUNDAY

after

EPIPHANY



A NOTE TO PARENTS

On the mountaintop, for a brief moment, Jesus' friends see him as he truly is. Radiant with light and life, he stands as the Son of God, expressing to the Father's perfect satisfaction the will and providence of God; yet he also stands with Moses and Elijah as the human servant of God, embodying in his obedience all the obedience and heroism of God's people, past, present, and future.

Jesus has just asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" They struggle to express what they have seen, and heard, and learned of him: "A prophet ... like John the Baptist ... like Elijah ..." and Simon finally says it, "You are the Messiah ... you are the Son of God!" Jesus says, "Yes," and tries to describe to them what that means: it means the Cross along with the crown. But this they cannot grasp, and in Mark's account the conversation simply ends. Then, "six days later," Jesus takes three of them up the mountain, and shows them everything they have struggled to formulate about him as they have watched him at work and tried to copy him. It all comes clear in this moment; they do not grasp it as a concept, they simply perceive it as a single, whole, undifferentiated experience, like opening their mouths and swallowing. *Jesus is God. Jesus is us. It all comes together in him.*

We all have moments of "epiphany" or "transfiguration" in our lives, when for a brief interlude an issue with which we have been struggling (consciously or not) suddenly falls into place and becomes clear. There is evidence that moments of sudden and overwhelming insight into the very nature of God may sometimes, even often, occur in the lives of very young children. They may be unable to verbalize this experience even to themselves; but it is real, it may be remembered vividly for decades, and it can be enormously influential in a child's lifelong spirituality. Parents cannot control these experiences. But we can provide an atmosphere which is accepting of our children's unique encounters with God, and which enables them, as they grow, to name the One who has met them on the mountaintop and to channel the light and life they have seen in him into obedience and love.

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*Jesus led Peter, James and John
up a high mountain ... and he
was transfigured before them.*

MARK 9:2



