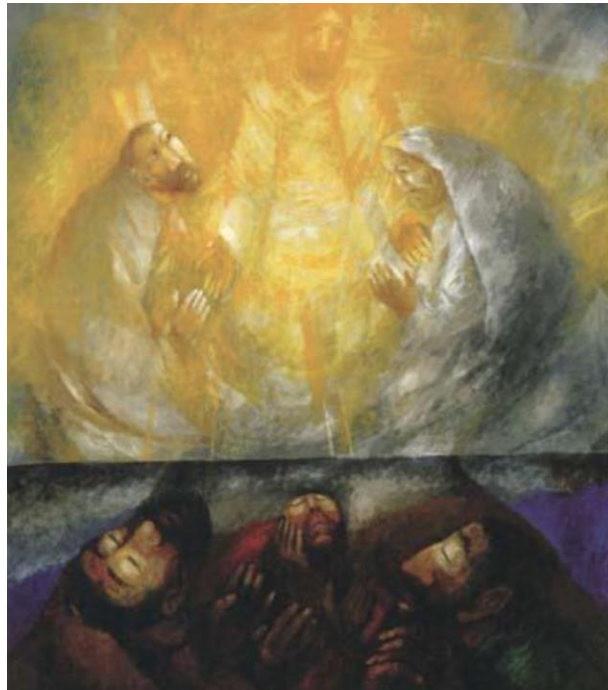


Sermon: Let Your Light Shine Text: Matthew 17:1-9 Transfiguration Sunday
Rideau Park United Church, Ottawa ON Rev. Steve Clifton

Matthew 17: After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. ²There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light.



The Jewish philosopher Martin Buber wrote a book called *I Thou*. He wrote of those moments when we encounter another deeply and profoundly so that they stop being an object and become a subject. They move from ordinary to extraordinary.

Martin Buber wanted us to recall times when we have encountered another and it is not the usual “Me and You” encounter. It’s an “I and Thou” meeting. Are there not times when we see a loved one as they are? In depth. Radiant. Wonderful.

Peter Rollins speaks of moments when, in love, we recognize the grandeur of another person. If you are a Dr. Who fan you will understand when he uses the image of a Tardis, an old British police call box that is the Doctor’s space ship and time machine, that when you step inside is an infinite space, a place of wonder. So each person is a thing of wonder; we are more than we seem at first look, if we take a moment to really see.



So the Gospel tells the story of Jesus transfigured on the top of Mt Tabor. So full is he of the glory of God that he shines like the sun; so pure and holy is he that he is bright and white as snow. He stands with Moses the lawgiver and Elijah the prophet because he embodies the traditions of Israel. A cloud descends, a sign of the Holy presence, and a voice is heard: "this is my son, my beloved in whom I am pleased...."

For a moment the 3 disciples on Tabor's summit see Jesus in all his fullness. It's a divine Epiphany. A moment of spiritual insight.

On Mt Tabor, in a blinding, dazzling moment Jesus shines like the sun. His true nature is seen in a moment of mountain top brilliance.

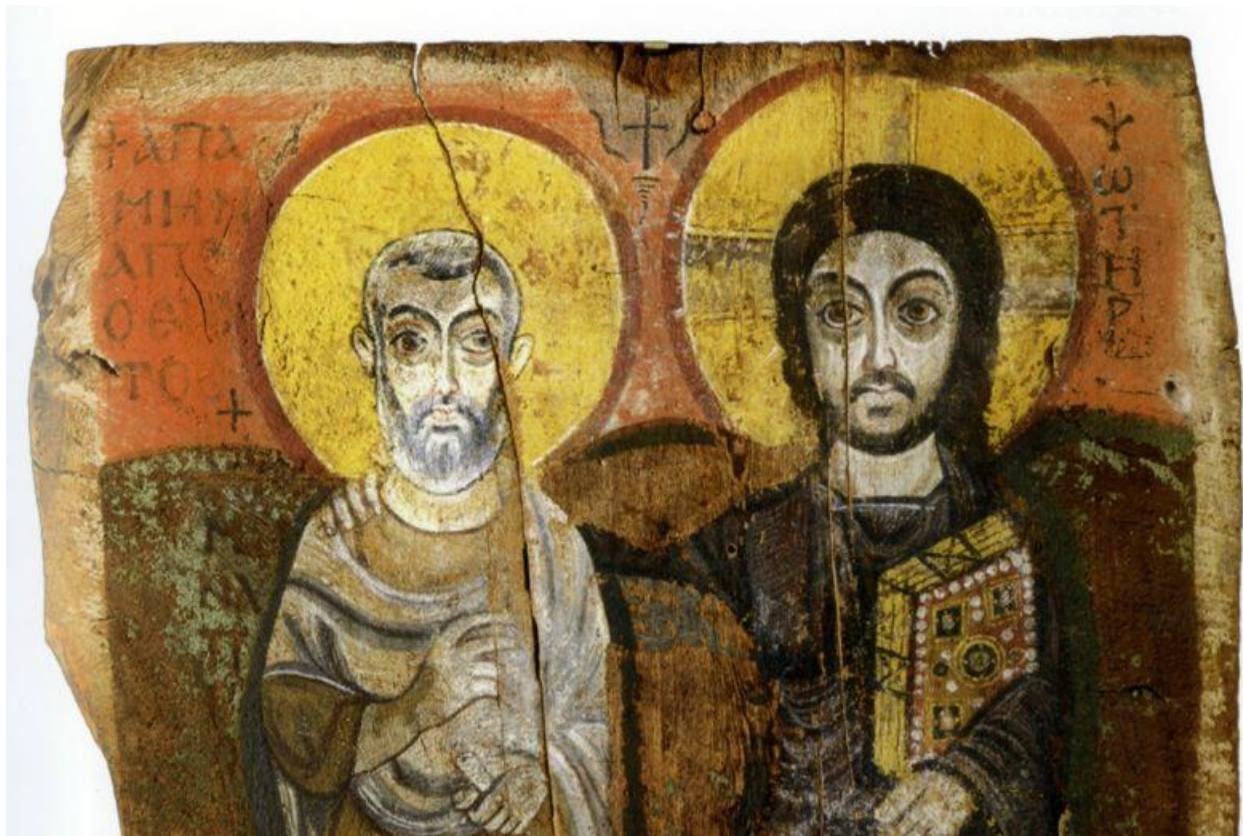


Jesus shines. Jesus is the light of world.

How about you? Have you considered your brightness lately? How many lumens of light might shine in you?

Modern physics has shown that even what looks like total darkness, which is 96 or 97% of the universe, dark energy, dark matter, is actually not darkness at all. It is actually light. We just can't see it. Every atom and every electron in all of the universe is either conserving light energy, releasing photons of light or gathering photons of light. Light really is everywhere. All matter is inherently and intrinsically light.

Physically we all emit light. There is an electromagnetic field that we all create and it can be photographed. We are all radiant. In new age and alternative healing circles they speak of our aura, a light that surrounds each one of us. And significance is seen in the colour and strength of that light. Health and spiritual state may be reflected in that aura of light that surrounds us...



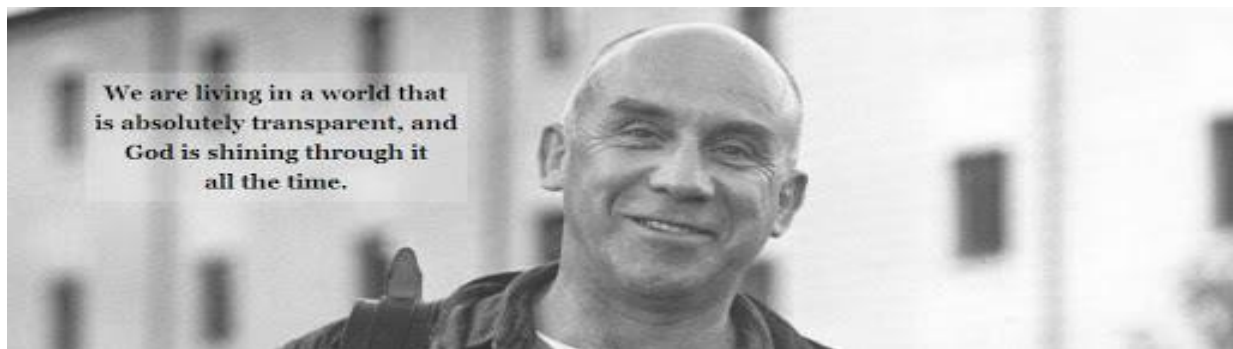
And artists depict the holy among us as shining with light. Halos in art indicate the holy light of God that shines in some people. The bigger the halo the closer to God...

And don't we talk about one another as if we are conscious of the light that shines in others. Someone may brighten our day. Or their face might light up with joy...

Jesus is the light of the world. And on Mt Tabor he shines bright. But just a few chapters before this story, Matthew records the words of Jesus who says: "You are the light of the world so let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:14-16)

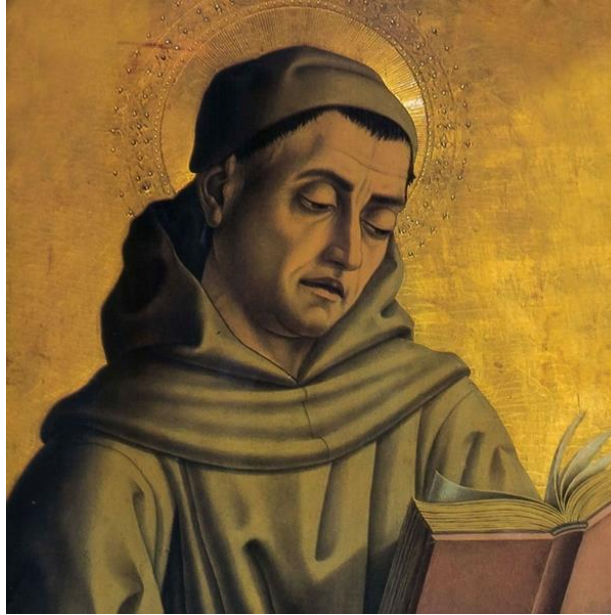
The light that shines in Jesus tells us who he is: The Light of the world. Might it also remind us of the light, the divine light that shines is everything, including you.

In the Christian tradition there are others that echo Jesus words about our being the light of the world:



Mystic and monk- Thomas Merton wrote:

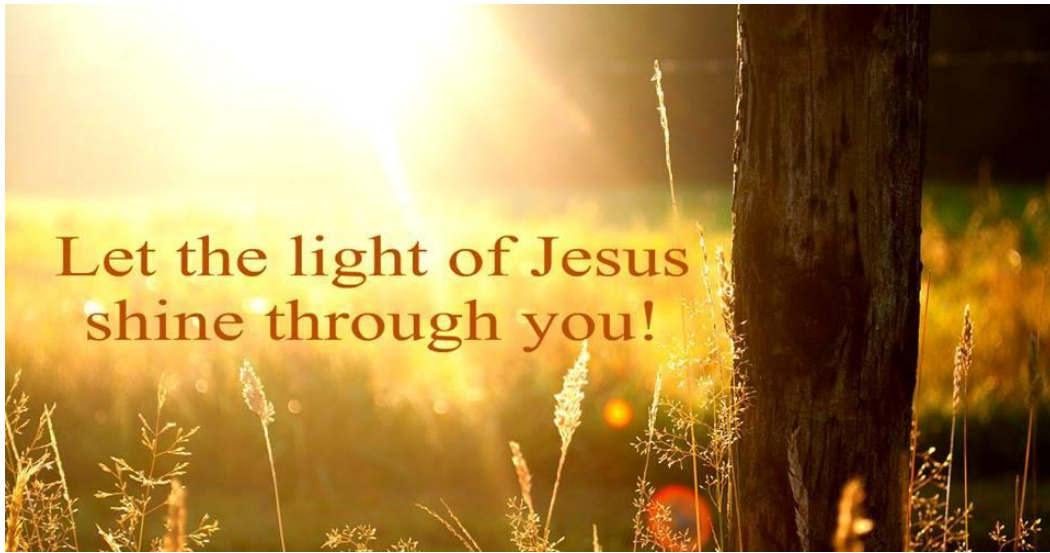
I have the immense joy of being a [human being], a member of a race in which God became incarnate. As if the sorrows and stupidities of the human condition could overwhelm me, now I realize what we all are. And if only everybody could realize this! But it cannot be explained. There is no way of telling people that they are all walking around shining like the sun.



John Dun Scotus, an early theologian who influenced the Celtic tradition of our faith spoke of *Haecceitas* a Latin word that attempts capture the idea of the divine presence that shines in everything. . . . There was an old theological argument: If we are light are we windows or are we lamps? Does the light of God shine through us or from within us. According to Scotus, we are lamps. Creation is filled with an inner light that shines forth from within. Each being possesses an immanent dignity; all of us is already gifted by the loving Creator with a sanctity beyond our ability to understand. Once we recognize the divine light that shines in Creation, in others, and in ourselves, we are called to shine forth like Jesus with divine love.



Harriet Tubman, escaped slave turned abolitionist wrote of her moment of freedom as she crossed from America into Canada: “When I found I had crossed that line, I looked at my hands to see if I was the same person. There was such a glory over everything; the sun came like gold through trees, and over the fields, and I felt like I was in Heaven. “



The poet William Wordsworth wrote: "But trailing clouds of glory, do we come from God, who is our home. — "

On Mt. Tabor Jesus shines like the sun. And it illuminates the whole of Creation. Jesus is the Light of the world and we are to shine with that same God given light.

Nelson Mandela shared these often quoted words:

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.

Amen