May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer. Amen.

There are times when we look at our life, our circumstances, and we want more, so we ask question, like “Is this all, there is”? We look at our circumstances as a picture. If it is pretty, pleasing, and shows us what we want to see, then God is good and life is as it should be. When we don’t see what we want, then we often look for a new picture.

Most of us, I think, seek God in the circumstances of life. We want God to show up, be present, and do something. This is the God who does. This is the God described in Mark’s gospel up to the point of today’s reading. We might think about this as the first part of the spiritual journey. It is the journey of discovering God in the circumstances. This is what the disciples have been doing.

They have seen Jesus cast our demons, heal Peter’s mother-in-law, and cure the sick of Capernaum. He’s cleansed the leper and made a withered hand new and strong. Paralytics now walk, the blind see, and thousands are fed.

At some point we must, however, begin to discover the God who is beyond the circumstances. This is the God who is. This is the second part of the spiritual journey. Jesus is leading Peter, James and John, up the mountain to discover the God who is beyond circumstances. Here their pictures of life’s circumstances will become windows by which they step into a new world, a new way of seeing, a new way of hearing, and new way of being. Jesus did not suddenly light up and become something he was not. No, their eyes were healed and opened so they could see Jesus as he had always been. The voice in the cloud was not new. Their ears were opened and they heard the voice that has never ceased speaking from the beginning. Whenever our picture of life’s circumstances becomes a window into new life we stand in a transfigured moment. Circumstances haven’t changed. We have changed and that seems to change everything.

Those transfigured moments are all around. Every one of us could tell a story about stepping back from the picture of our life, seeing with new eyes, listening with different ears, and discovering a window that opened into another world and another way of being.

Maybe it was the day you revealed to another person the secret you had carried for years. In telling the secret the picture of your life as one of guilt and shame became an open window through which you stepped. The darkness gave way to light, the chains fell off, and forgiveness overcame sin. Think about the day you held your child for the very first time. Yes, it was a picture of a newborn but it was also a window through which you stepped and were forever changed. You experienced a new vocation as a parent. You became a part of the mystery of creation.

I remember speaking with one of my previous parishioners. Together we talked, laughed and sat in silence. The picture of her life as one of cancer, pain, and suffering had become an open window through which she stepped. She began to understand that in the midst of her cancer she was already being healed. In hospital she said to me: “There is so much more going on than we usually see or know”. The tears and fear are real but just as real is the voice that says to her, “Oh my daughter, my beloved, you are already ok.” Those windows are everywhere if we have eyes to see and ears to hear.

We often want to go back to those transfigured moments. We are tempted to build dwellings places for those moments. Booths, dwelling places, will only keep us in the past. To the extent we cling to the past, we close ourselves to the future God offers. So, Jesus, Peter, James, and John came back down the mountain. They could not stay there but neither did they leave the mountain. They took it with them. It is what would carry them through the passion and crucifixion to the resurrection.

Transfigured moments change us, sustain us, prepare us, encourage us, and guide us into the future regardless of the circumstances we face. They show us who we are. We are the transfigured people of God. Open your eyes and see a transfigured world. Open your ears and hear the transfiguring voice. Open your heart and become a transfigured life. Amen.