

## Transfiguration

Have you ever had the experience of having a friend or spouse who you have known for years and shared many intimate moments with totally take you by surprise when they tell you something that you didn't know or you had an experience of them that caused you to change the way that you see them? If so, you may be able to partially understand the mystery of the Transfiguration of Jesus.

The three apostles mentioned in the gospel reading had been hanging around with Jesus long enough to know that he could quote scripture and easily put down any critic. They had even seen him perform miracles. But after their experience with him on the mountain (after his transfiguration) they understood him in a very different way. The change in his face and clothing along with the voice from a cloud convinced them that Jesus was also divine, that he was God. Ever since then Jesus' followers have been trying to figure out how he can be both human and divine.

I am going to do a little theology with you today. The study of Jesus' identity is called Christology. There are two different kinds of Christology – a high Christology and a low Christology. A high Christology tends to emphasize Jesus' divinity while a low Christology tends to emphasize Jesus' humanity. For some reason or other it is difficult to keep them in balance. We tend to emphasize one or the other.

Both Christologies are found not just in the bible or in prayers but also in music and art throughout the centuries. I would like to share two examples from music. Handel's "Messiah" reflects a high Christology while the song from "Godspell" *I don't know how to love him* reflects

a low Christology. See if you can tell the difference between the two. (Both songs will be played aloud.)

Some of the lyrics from Handel

Hallelujah...  
For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth  
The kingdom of this world; is become the kingdom of our Lord.  
And of his Christ  
And He shall reign forever and ever  
King of Kings forever and ever...  
And Lord of Lords forever and ever...  
He shall reign forever and ever

Some of the lyrics from Godspell

Don't know how to love him, what to do, how to move him  
I've been changed, yes really changed  
In these past few days when I see myself, I seem like someone else.  
I don't know how to take this, I don't see why he moves me.  
He's a man, he's just a man  
And I've had so many men before in very many ways, he's just one more.  
Should I bring him down, should I scream and shout  
Should I speak of love, let my feelings out  
I never thought I'd come to this, what's it all about  
Don't you think it's rather funny that I should be in this position  
I'm the one who's always been so calm, so cool, no lover's fool  
Running every show, he scares me so  
Yet, if he said he loved me, I'd be lost, I'd be frightened  
I couldn't cope, just couldn't cope  
I'd turn my heard, I'd back away, I wouldn't want to know  
He scares me so, I want him so, I love him so

And so as we celebrate the feast of the Transfiguration of Jesus – what is your Christology? What is your experience of Jesus? How does Jesus influence what you say and do?

