

March 3, 2019

Michael Douglas

Thank you for having me here.

- Greetings from Bishop Lane, and all the folks from the Loring House.
- It is great to be here, and big thank you from our BOT for letting us share an office here.

Today I want us to reflect on 3 things:

1. Vs 28 - Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray.
2. What is transfiguration Sunday?
3. We can't stay on top of the mountain, but we must come down.

Today's gospel has made me think a lot about what does it mean that Jesus got up and went to a Mountain to pray?

What is it about going to a Mountain top? Do you have your own Mountain top place you like to go to? For many kids here in Maine, it is Camp Bishopswood, but more about that later.

Many people are shocked when I say this, but I'm 98% introverted on the Meyer Briggs Inventory. No, that doesn't mean I didn't get loud or excited when the Patriots won yet another Super Bowl, or that I can't lead a great version of "I said a boom chicka boom", or that I just sit around and read books all the time. It just means that when I need to recharge I need to be alone, or get to a mountain top, unlike extroverts who recharge by being around other people.

My guess was that Jesus headed up the mountain because He needed some quite time, some time to recharge, knowing what was coming.

All of us are fortunate to live where we do. It is pretty easy for us to find a "mountain top" place here on the mid-coast. Maybe it is on the top of Maiden's cliff, along the rocky shores of the Atlantic, or right here at St. Thomas'.

Last summer Bishopswood and 5 other camps started working with Portland Community Squash (the sport, not the vegetable) and King Middle School in Portland to get immigrant and refugee kids to camp.

Bishopswood was able raise almost \$10,000 to get 11 immigrant and refugee kids to Bishopswood. Many of these campers stayed for multiple weeks.

It was amazing having these children at camp. Everyone did all the fun camp things we always do at camp, like swimming in Lake Megunticook, kayaking, SUP, arts and crafts, sports and games, performing arts, and nature studies.

March 3, 2019

Michael Douglas

Multiple times a day these campers would thank me for giving them an opportunity they have never had before, trying many of these activities for the first time in their lives. For many of them who escaped their home countries, camp was a negative word for them, prior to coming to Bishopswood.

But Bishopswood was a safe place for them. We had over 450 kids last summer, who had the best week of their whole entire year at camp. Many of them had a mountain top experience. Here is a letter from Sunday, one of our immigrant and refugee kids, sent to me this fall:

*****READ LETTER*****

One night, after our all camp good nights, the oldest girl's cabin asked if they could talk to me. The night before they had all stayed at the Bald Rock Lean-to in Camden Hills State Park. As a cabin they were able to watch the sunset and wake up for the sunrise. They said they have never experienced anything like this, they have never felt closer to a group of people, and said they now have proof that God exists. Sunday went on to say this is the first time in her life that she felt her color didn't matter and that she belongs to a group of kids her age.

At Bishopswood, it doesn't matter if you are rich or poor, black or white, or come to camp broken, or on top of the world. Camp meets kids where they are and transforms them into better people.

Last summer we had believers, Episcopalians, claimed atheists, Catholics, Jewish, Muslim, and non-churched kids at camp.

I believe camp is fertilizing a seed in kids, that when they have times of doubt or feel lost in this world, they can remember this safe place and feel connected to the Episcopal church or something more powerful than themselves.

You see, Camp for many kids can do a couple of things

First, it can reinforce and strengthen the love of God they have been taught at home or in church.

Or

Second, What I think is the most powerful, is to watch a child who receives the "love" of God through the community of camp for the first time in their life.

Camp is a Mountain top experience or we can say a transfiguration for many kids that come to camp.

Let's break down this big word:

- Trans- meaning to change

and

- Figure- meaning shape or form

March 3, 2019

Michael Douglas

I think many of us are familiar with transfiguration. I'm sure many of us remember the mild-mannered Clark Kent who could go inside a phone booth and change his form into Superman or even how transfiguration was a required class for Harry and others to take at Hogwarts so they could one day change the shape of a bird into a goblet.

In today's gospel, three disciples actually see Jesus changed into who he really is. Jesus of Nazareth, God's son. Unlike the bird, Jesus was not changed into something else, Jesus became more of who He really was. We are presented this story at the beginning of lent to prepare for the events surrounding Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection.

These mountain top experiences are wonderful, and we need them, but we can't dwell there, we can't stay there. We can't build tents and camp out on the mountain top. Instead, we need to connect with God and then come down into our communities because this is where we live.

So, come down and connect with the world. Connect with the people around you in your community. You have received a blessing from God, and now it is time to return to the world to share that blessing with others.

Each week on the last night of camp, at our closing ceremony we talk about how camp is the real world. That this is the way people should be treated, the way we should act, the way we should feel. This is how the real world should be. But we can't stay at camp forever. We need to go back to our schools, homes, and churches and make the outside world more like camp, the real world. That is a transfiguration.

I would like to close with a section from Michael Curry's intentional commitment to a set of practices, called the Way of Love. It's a commitment to follow Jesus: The 7 principals are; Turn, Learn, Pray, Worship, Bless, Go, Rest

This is from the section go. It is to give us courage to leave our Mountain tops and go, to transfigure the world.

As Jesus went to the highways and byways, He sends us beyond our circles and comfort, to witness to the love, justice, and truth of God with our lips and with our lives. We go to listen with humility and to join God in healing a hurting world. We go to become Beloved Community, a people reconciled in love with God and one another. Amen