

In tonight's First Reading from Genesis, God's message comes to Abraham in the form of a messenger or an angel...And comes in this form at least twice that we know of.

Later in Mark's Gospel, we hear that Jesus is "trans-figured" ...Jesus' clothes suddenly turning a dazzling white...In the middle of the Gospel, we hear that God as Creator comes down in the form of a cloud...Not just some ordinary cloud, but actually a cloud that talks, a cloud that has a voice....Then, our Creator God suddenly disappears...It's as if some magic act has just occurred....with just God in the form of Jesus remaining...And finally, at the end of the Gospel, we hear the foretelling of Jesus as God rising from the dead...Another magically moment, for sure.

So we get....

God as Angel Messenger

The New White Clothes Jesus

God as Speaking Cloud

And

Jesus rising from the earth into the heavens

All of these these things that we are hearing about are re-makings or overhauls or metamorphoses (like the caterpillar into the butterfly) or transfigurations.

Tonight's Gospel is called the Transfiguration Gospel...It focuses on the remaking of Jesus.... And what stands out for me, at least, when I hear that word "transfiguration" is the prefix of that word...The word "trans"....is so prominently and frequently used in the Bible yet it's a word that many of those in power in the church have used against our community.

But it's an interesting exercise to think of our God as "trans"Perhaps we could even view the Sacred Trinity as "trans-like" in nature....Seeing God as "creator" "lover" ...Transitioning to "human" "a vulnerable being like us"And then transitioning again to Holy Spirit as "the one who makes us holy" or as, simply, "love itself".

If we take a look at God as Creator, there is no assigned gender or sexual identity...We don't think of God, the Creator as having any particular sexual parts, any particular genitalia that makes God male or female....Yes, in our weekly Lord's Prayer, we may say "Our Father and Mother who art in heaven" but I'd argue that, for most of us, that is just simply a way to aid us in picturing God a little bit...It's a way to perhaps make God more relatable to us... However we can also think of God as "Creator" "Beloved" without assigning any gender identity at all

Throughout the Bible, our God comes to us in many forms...

The burning bush

An angel

Rushing Wind

Fire

A dove

A lion or a lamb

Ghost

Whirlwind

Storms

Rock

Just to name a few

God is always in transition...God is always in transformation...Perhaps one of the easiest ways to relate to our God is when our Creator is in these other forms...God as “trans” or “transformational” gives us more insight into just who our God is...We understand our God better, I’d say, because of these transformations...God as “trans” in fact gives us comfort.

So why is it when we try to make transformations, transitions in our own life, the world seems to fight back at us.

The teenage girl, who in order to try to fit in, is told “You can’t dye your hair that color” or “I’m not allowing you to get your lip pierced”.

The older woman that is told “You can’t wear those kind of clothes. That’s for young people”.

Ways that we personally try to make transitions or changes with our own body or bodily appearance are frequently put under much societal scrutiny.

Hair and clothes are just small, but important, examples.

Taking this one step further...When gender expression or gender identity is involved, the push back by our society becomes even stronger.

It may begin when a boy, even at Halloween, chooses to dress in what has traditionally been called opposite sex clothing and gets a fight from family and friends.

Later in life, someone choosing to express their gender in ways that aren’t traditional for their gender may get impacted in a number of negative ways....Laughing, mocking, physical abuse, and or severe injury may result just for expressing one’s gender in a non-traditional way.

Moving from gender expression to gender identity can certainly increase the societal impact. We are forced, as in Let's Make A Deal to choose "the curtain" or "the box" If we don't fit "the curtain" or "the box", others may make the decision for us, particularly at a young age, and then affecting our entire life.

National statistics show us that 20% of trans people have lost a job due to bias...50% were harassed on the job...20% were evicted or denied housing...and 78% of trans students have been harassed or assaulted.

We often hear society saying that trans folks need to keep their original gender identity from birth....That this is the way it was meant to be...They say "Jesus talks about this in the Bible, ya know".

So now to support....Let me tell you several of the Biblical passages in which Jesus speaks against changes in gender expression and gender identity.

Here they are:

(long pause)

Oh wait, you know what, there aren't any.

There is nowhere in the Bible that Jesus talks about gender expression or gender identity in a negative way.

In fact, in Galatians, Chapter 3, verse 28, we hear: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male or female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus".

God is our example....As Creator, there is no gender....As Spirit, there is no gender....By sending down Jesus as savior, it was not Jesus as man...We don't hear about the manly qualities of Jesus...It was Jesus as human, as God's human presence on earth.

So let us worship “God as Trans”As a God who constantly changes and evolves...As a God of Surprise...As a God of Uniqueness....

And let us view ourselves as being in the image, in the likeness of our God...Not as female and male, but as our constant changing and evolving selves.