Sermon: (from Matthew 17.1-9)

Transfiguration story is rather odd – is it a Resurrection appearance? There are some similarities.

In the story Moses and Elijah appear with Jesus, witnessed by Peter, James and John. These two figures represent the Law and the Prophets – ie Israel. We do not hear what they said to Jesus, but every indication is that they affirm Jesus. But what is it about Jesus they are affirming?

2 things from Mt 16:

1. Who do people say I am? Who do you say I am? Peter: you are the chosen one.
2. The Chosen One will suffer in Jerusalem.

Moses and Elijah agree with all this.

In the gospels of Matthew, Mark & Luke this is a turning point in Jesus story. (It is not in John)

Everything afterwards is about Jesus going to Jerusalem where 2. will occur. This is what we think of in Lent, and why we have this story today, just before Lent begins.

Why did Jesus tell the disciples to keep silent (v9)? Because the event cannot be understood away from resurrection (hence the link). I had a sabbatical in NZ in 1997 and it is only truly understood when in 2005 I made a decision about coming permanently to NZ in 2006. Think of when an event only made sense for you years later.

Is the Transfiguration a miracle?

Depends on what you mean by a miracle. A supernatural event? One that contradicts science?

A miracle is something thro’ which God is revealed – who God is, what God is about, what God does.   
A miracle could be looking at a flower, a beautiful scene, or a sudden healing, ‘explainable’ or not.

What is important is not trying to explain it, but asking: What does this tell us about God?

This is why we need to ask not for miracles (though good to have them), but for understanding of who God is, God’s purposes and plans, which may or may not need a miracle to get through to us!

I guess if we are completely in tune with God, no need for a miracle! But how many are so in tune?

So maybe miracles are what we need from time to time.