

March 13, 2022
Second Sunday of Lent
Luke 9:28b-36

Jesus took Peter, John, and James and went up the mountain to pray. While he was praying his face changed in appearance and his clothing became dazzling white. And behold, two men were conversing with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his exodus that he was going to accomplish in Jerusalem.

Peter and his companions had been overcome by sleep, but becoming fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. As they were about to part from

him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good that we are here; let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." But he did not know what he was saying. While he was still speaking, a cloud came and cast a shadow over them, and they became frightened when they entered the cloud. Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my chosen Son; listen to him." After the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. They fell silent and did not at that time tell anyone what they had seen.

Background

Luke places his account of the Transfiguration of Jesus after the first time he has talked with his disciples about his future rejection by the elders, scribes and chief priests (Luke 9:22). Jesus then tells the disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me..." (Luke 9:23). Luke states that it was about eight days after Jesus had given this teaching that he took Peter, John, and James up the mountain where the transfiguration took place.

The event as described by Luke has two distinct parts. The first is a description of the transfiguration of Jesus, which takes place while the disciples are "overcome by sleep." The text states that Jesus took Peter, James and John up the mountain to pray. Neither Matthew (Matthew 17:1-8) nor Mark (Mark 9:2-8) mention that Jesus is going up the mountain to pray. Luke relates this to his community as an experience of Jesus in prayer. During the transfiguration it is Jesus who is changed, interiorly and exteriorly. The text states that his face was changed, and his clothing became dazzling white. But this prayer experience does not include Peter, James and John. Verse 32 states that they were overcome by sleep.

The second part of the description includes the disciples, but it no longer refers to them as Peter, James, and John. Now it is Peter and his companions, reflecting Peter's role in the rest of the event. He recognizes the unique blessing of the experience and suggests that they build tents so that Jesus, Moses, and Elijah can stay, and the experience can continue. Lest Peter misunderstand what is taking place, they are embraced by the dark cloud of God's presence, and God states clearly that Jesus is God's Son. Then when the cloud lifts, Jesus is standing there alone. Jesus is not a prophet like Moses and Elijah, but he only is God's Son.



Cupola Mosaic, Church of the Transfiguration,
Mt. Tabor, Israel 2012 – Bro Alan

Reflection Questions

1. Where do you go when you want to really pray, when you really want to talk to God, and to listen to God?
2. Has anyone ever showed you where they go when they really want to pray, or taken you with them when they go?
3. What do you think it was like among the disciples in the week between Jesus sharing with them his belief that he would be rejected by the religious leaders and when he took Peter, James and John up the mountain to pray?
4. What do you think it was like to climb the mountain with Jesus as he found a place to pray?
5. What do you think it was like for the disciples who were not invited to join Jesus?
6. What experience do you have that may help you appreciate how the disciples were feeling either as they climbed the mountain with Jesus or as they waited, left behind, for their return?
7. The gospel text describes a dark cloud appearing and coming over the disciples. What does the experience of the disciples remind you of in your life?
8. How do you relate to Peter, James and John coming down the mountain with Jesus that day? What kind of thoughts do you think they might have had as they came down the mountain that day with Jesus?
9. Why do you think the Church has chosen to give us this gospel text for our reflection as we begin the second week of Lent?
10. Can you take some time to talk with God honestly about your experience of God's presence in your own journey or this Lent, or some other memories or feelings that arose within you from this gospel?

The gospel background and reflection questions are written by Fr. Paul Gallagher, OFM.

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