

## Coming Down the Mountain

Second week of Lent – The Transfiguration of the Lord – Mark 9: 2-10- February 25, 2018

To be able to come down the mountain, one must first go up. **“Jesus took Peter, James and John and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves.”** I would suspect that to go up that mountain would have taken effort. Jesus along with Peter, James and John would have experienced the physical demands of climbing up the rugged terrain, possibly stepping over large rocks, occasionally slipping, and maybe falling. The climb up would not have been easy. What the disciples experienced on the mountain top would not have been easy to understand. This was a divine encounter, an encounter that would not have easily been explained or shared.

This mountain top story, as told to us by Mark, is bookended with the physical actions of going up the mountain and then coming down the mountain. The glory that the three disciples experience at the pinnacle of this event is known as the Transfiguration of the Lord. Celebrated every year on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent, the Transfiguration stands as a reminder to all of us of the glory that is Christ.

Peter is so taken by the experience of Jesus’ dazzling transformation that he doesn’t want to leave the mountain. Instead Peter says, **“Rabbi, it is good that we are here! Let us make three tents one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”** Clearly, Peter does not understand that coming down the mountain is the point of the entire experience. Jesus has entrusted the three disciples with knowledge that is beyond their current understanding. They will need to descend the mountain, continue with Jesus on his journey to Calvary, and then, only after the resurrection will they begin to comprehend, in faith, Jesus’ true identity and mission.

We are called on Ash Wednesday to embrace and believe the Good News that Jesus is the fulfillment of God’s reign. We are called during Lent to spend some time recalling the events of Jesus’ passion, death and resurrection. We are charged with the Lenten disciplines of prayer, fasting and alms-giving to help us climb the illusive mountain of faith. However, we are not supposed to stay up on top of the mountain of personal piety or intense spiritual experiences. We are, instead, to come down the mountain and live the gospel in the ordinary, everyday experiences of our life, bringing the joy and the message of the gospel to all we meet.

Happy Lent!



Sue Schettler