

## Transfiguration Sunday / Last Sunday before Lent

Jesus goes up a mountain and becomes dazzling white. In art, the transfiguration is a highly symbolic event, representing the triumph of divine light over earthly darkness.

**Fresh Takes** I have preached on the transfiguration so many times. It comes around twice a year. So, I thought long and hard about how to find a fresh perspective on this moment. What do *I* need to understand to help *us* hear what the spirit is saying?

I have had half a dozen moments in my life where holy light filled my consciousness. They are easy to describe, and I find a sense of calm recalling these holy moments: Walking Montserrat, checking email in Austin, driving down a Tulsa highway, praying the rosary in Houston, and the holy darkness of a second-floor stairwell in the Heights.

I almost never mention the dark side, but it belongs just as much as the light in the realm of transfigurations. One of the fourth century's "Cappadocian Fathers" was Gregory of Nyssa. He said about holy darkness: *Moses grew in knowledge, he declared that he had seen God in the darkness, that is, that he had then come to know that what is divine is beyond all knowledge and comprehension, for the text says, 'Moses approached the dark cloud where God was.*

Either way: Filled with light or dark you can probably remember when you have had a transfiguration moment. There was this big, expansive, meaningful presence to undergird who you are and who you are becoming.

**What Now** As I have gotten older, the fireworks of the spirit have dimmed. I miss it, really miss it. I *might* be learning now that these transfiguration experiences are meant to be gas in the engine for the expedition more than experience. Your holy moments can become unhelpful if they become the point and not a spiritual aid. In the Gospel, Peter wanted the mountain to be the final stop. He was ready to start construction on the Jesus, Moses, Elijah shrines, instead of going down the mountain with Jesus.

It is hard to stay focused on the journey and not the shiny objects:

- Jesus, it was good when my kids were home.
- Jesus, it was good when my health was better.
- Jesus, it was good when my church was full.
  - Can't we build a tabernacle for those memories?

We still have a lot of highway to cover. Transfigurations are a gift for the expedition, but not the destination. So, if you haven't had a transfiguration moment: chop wood, carry water. If you have had that moment, chop wood, carry water. **Todd**