

Mark 9:2-9^{v vi}

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. Then Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!" Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them anymore, but only Jesus. As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

^v About the Gospel: Mark 9:2-9

The account of Jesus' transfiguration echoes God's appearance to Moses on Mount Sinai (see Exodus 24:15-18 and 34:29-35). The voice from the cloud repeats the statement from Jesus' baptism (1:11) with the additional command "listen to him" (v. 7). As Moses represents the tradition of the law, so Elijah represents the prophetic tradition.

Mark emphasizes Peter's confused responses. The dwellings he proposes building would be like those built in the vineyards at the time of the Jewish Feast of Booths.

^{vi} Reflection and Response

Today's readings mark an appropriate end to a season that began with John the Baptist's calling his listeners to alertness. The prophet sensed dimly that the One who followed him would transcend the limits of this world and fulfill the fondest human hope for a Messiah.

These scriptures also mark the beginning of Lent. The theme of transformation signals that the time of our conversion is at hand.

The transfiguration took place at the beginning of the apostles' "Lent," a dark time as Jesus moved surely and steadily toward his passion. They were probably as confused about his mission and their part in it as we are, as

reluctant to follow, as needful of light for a murky way.

The sublime silence of the mountaintop frightened Peter into jabbering talk. Ironically, Peter's later writing reveals that he has cherished that moment of insight on the mountaintop over years that must have often seemed dark or confusing. The vision of light sustained him through the darkness of the passion, the torture of his own betrayal and the Church's tumultuous early years when he must have been bewildered about which direction his leadership should take.

What is true for Peter is true for us. We, too, have our moments, pure gifts when a life that is often askew slips into perfect order and clarity. At such times we know the presence of the living Lord. We would trust him then with our dearest treasures, and we regret the times we have been stingy in our faith commitments.

Quietly consider:

In what areas of my life would I like the revealing, transforming light of Jesus to shine today?