



## Where Faith Is Lived

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Lent

### Mark 9:2-9

*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 any more, 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.*

It feels good to be singled out for special attention, and surely Peter, James, and John were complimented by Jesus' choice of them to accompany him to the mountain for prayer. Once there, though, they were frightened out of their wits by the other-worldly experience that surrounded them. Jesus' appearance was transfigured. Moses and Elijah appeared on the mountain with him and spoke with him. And then out of the vastness of the creation surrounding them there came the sound of *the* voice, God's own voice, affirming what they had dared to believe about Jesus and commanding them to "listen to him," rather than to their own desires and expectations. It was only as they came down the mountain that they began to understand what had transpired and what it meant for them.

It is likely that it is from this text that the figure of speech, "mountain top experience" was coined to describe experiences of the nearness of God that break through the clouds of our confusion, revealing God's own truth to us, and confirming within us what we have dared to believe by faith alone.

Of course, those moments do not last, and the next thing we know we find ourselves walking back down the mountain—back down to life as usual, back to following Jesus even when we do not altogether understand where he is leading us or why; following Jesus in spite of the doubts, the fears, the misunderstandings that shadow the disciple's life on the plain. Here is where we "take up the cross," and often it is the memory of the moment of clarity that helps to sustain us in the journey when listening to Jesus is difficult.

### Prayer:

Dear Lord, thank you for the moments of clarity that break through the clouds of our uncertainty. When I feel lost and uncertain, help me to remember and to trust you. Amen.