

Transfiguration

For some reason I read the story of Jesus Transfiguration differently this time
than I have before-

I seemed to notice things I hadn't noticed before-

Scripture is like that! There's such depth and meaning- such life there
that we never can exhaust the meaning of any part of it.

*Jesus has taken Peter and James and John- his 'right hand' men
on a hike up a high mountain-

We don't know what they were thinking or if they had any expectations
about why they were going- but they couldn't have imagined
what they were about to experience

First, according to Luke, Jesus was transfigured-
his face shone- his clothing became dazzling white-

Then Moses, who gave the Law appeared with Elijah,
who was the greatest of the prophets.

Notice that Peter and James and John seem alright up to this point-
Peter, always eager- and usually wrong- says- "This is great- Let's stay!"
"We'll build three places for you to live here."

At that point there's a cloud- and Luke says it overshadows them-
and that they enter into the cloud-

It's at that point that the three disciples lose it!

They're terrified- and then a voice says

“This is my Son, the Chosen- Listen to him.”

and then -the cloud passes and they see Jesus- alone.

Luke doesn't say what else, if anything, Jesus said about the experience-

Except that he reports the men didn't tell anyone what they'd seen.

You have to wonder what they understood about what they saw and what they heard- –

but -I can't believe they were ever again the same again-

I don't believe they were same three fisherman who hiked up that mountain-

because they had been in the presence of the Holy

It's interesting though, that as long as the disciples could see Jesus-

even though he was with two long dead figures, who represented the Hebrew faith.-

as long as they could see Jesus- they felt OK about being there-

even wanted to stay-

-But when the cloud appeared- and Jesus disappeared from sight-

and they heard a different voice- they were terrified.

*Maybe it's because I've been through a cloud or two myself over the years-

but I've been thinking about how we- -you and I-

can be transfigured by the events that come to us in our lives.

We probably wouldn't use the word “transfigured”-

we'd probably say “transformed” –

(I've read a few articles lately about ‘The Transformative Church’)

That seems to be a buzz-word in today's religious writing.

Imagine yourself walking along- minding your own business- just following Jesus-

doing what you do every day-

maybe something wonderful comes your way-

You're life seems on track- life is good—you're in control-

and- suddenly, your feet are knocked out from under you-

there's catastrophic news- a death – an accident-

- something that involves you intimately- unexpectedly-

(you may even feel a pain in your chest, radiating down your arm-)

You feel overshadowed by a cloud- you have no control- can't see the way

-don't know where God is in all this- don't know what's ahead-

The unknowable-ness of it is frightening- terrifying.

Eventually- you come out of the cloud - but things are never the same-

Having once been overshadowed by that cloud,

you're not the same- you're transformed-

You have discovered that God is present even in your/ our unknowing-

And -You radiate with an experience of the presence of the Almighty-

or- maybe you reject the experience as having no meaning –

as something to be fought and denied-

it was an experience of darkness.

I would challenge you to think deeply about transformation- transfiguration-

Jesus, on the mountain, was transfigured by the power of God-

He was revealed for who he was- and is- God's Chosen.

It was the voice of God in the cloud that so frightened James, John and Peter.

The words of God revealed Jesus as who he is!

“Listen to him”- was what God said!

I believe there's a meaning for us here in the account of the Transfiguration-

it applies to us, too-

Within the sudden losses of control that come along in life-

when that happens- within that cloud of unknowing-

whether it's illness- or the death of a dear one- or the loss of a friendship-

when we are overshadowed by a cloud of unknowing-

there's always the voice of God somewhere-

His voice points to Jesus- There's always meaning-

Jesus, - our friend- our brother- our Savior- the Transfigured One- is there-

He will meet us- will comfort us- give our lives meaning again-

and we will be transformed.

-and we won't ever be the same-

We- in some way- will reflect the glory of the Transfigured One-

(others will see and be comforted and strengthened

to meet the clouds of unknowing in their lives.)

Don't be afraid of clouds! God is there. Amen.