

The Inner Journey

February 11, 2018

We come to the end of a relatively short Epiphany season this year. If you are familiar with our annual liturgical journey, the church generally ends Epiphany with this passage from the gospel, this mount of transfiguration which Jesus ascended with three of his disciples, where he was transfigured in great white light.

The season of Epiphany is all about the revealing of Jesus as God's savior of the world, God's message to the world, the message of love, healing, and reconciliation. Throughout Epiphany, we hear through the gospel, as well as from the other scriptures, how Jesus is revealed in a number of ways. This final Sunday is an ultimate way, revealed by both the law and the prophets, represented by Moses and Elijah.

Life itself is its own journey of transfiguration. None of us look like we used to look. We all walk through life, and life changes us, transfigures us. There is that natural "mountain of transfiguration" that we call life. We change both on the outside and on the inside. Some of us change more gracefully than others, but there is no avoiding that transfiguring experience found in the wonder of life itself.

But there is a second journey we are invited to, that I think few of us take. Represented in the story, Jesus only took three of his disciples up this mountain of transfiguration. That is the inner journey. Life unloads us out of the womb and tells us to live our lives, to be in the world, to be affected by the world, and to love the world. That brings its own transfiguration. But through the invitation to those mountaintops, to those quiet places, to the solitary places, we have an opportunity to not just hear the noise around us and deal with the transfiguration of natural life but an opportunity to hear God within our own selves, within our hearts, within our souls. An opportunity to read the words left to us, inspired by the life of Jesus, the teachings of Jesus. That opportunity to do just as history's disciples were invited to do, to recognize Jesus as the son of God, and to listen to him, to hear his words to us. That is the inner journey.

All of us take the outer journey and experience it in the unique ways that we do. But we here in the church are invited to take the inner journey as well, that journey of prayer, of silence. That journey of forgiveness, and being forgiven. That journey of reflection and contemplation. That journey of being within our inner selves with God, in those mystical moments that are there for us to have.

So, in addition to being the ultimate manifestation of who Jesus was in the world, the mount of transfiguration story tells us that it is also that open door for us to enter into the next season that we now are invited into, the season of Lent. That season that the church recognizes as a time to return to our spiritual roots, to return to a sense of quiet and reflection and study and service.

These next 45 days are an invitation for us to take that inner journey, to be invited with just the few that walk it, to do the season of Lent, to give ourselves in meditation and reflection.

So I pray that now as we are exiting Epiphany, and as Jesus has been revealed to us, and as we, throughout our lives, here together as a community have walked this liturgy together, you now are invited to your own sense of observing Lent.

I pray that you give yourself to our communal times together, as well as your own personal times and in your own home, to observe the season of Lent, and to take that inner journey, and to not just be transfigured on the outside, but be changed on the inside.

Amen