

Luke 9: 28b-30

**Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him
Peter and John and James,
and went up on the mountain to pray.**

**And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed,
and his clothes became dazzling white.**

**Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him.
They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure,
which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.**

**Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep;
but since they had stayed awake,
they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him.**

**Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus,
Master, it is good for us to be here;**

**let us make three dwellings,
one for you,**

one for Moses

and one for Elijah—

not knowing what he said.

**While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them;
and they were terrified as they entered the cloud.**

Then from the cloud came a voice that said,

‘This my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!’”

When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone.

And they kept silent and in those days

told no one any of the things they had seen.

Meditation

A man was riding his Harley along a California beach
when suddenly the sky clouded over and from out of the clouds
in a booming voice, God said,
"Because you have tried to be faithful to me in all ways,
I will grant you one wish."
The biker pulled over and said,
"Build a bridge to Hawaii so I can ride over anytime I want."
God replied, "Your request is materialistic;
think of the enormous challenges for that kind of undertaking;
the supports required for reaching the bottom of the Pacific and
the concrete and steel it would take! I can do it...
but it is hard for me to justify your desire for worldly things.
Take a little more time and think of something
that could possibly help humanity."
The biker thought about it for a long time.
Finally, he said, "God, what I really wish is that I, and all men,
could understand women;
what she's thinking when she gives me the silent treatment, why she cries,
what she means when she says nothing's wrong,
why she snaps and complains when I try to help.
I want to know how to make a woman truly happy."

God replied:
"You want two lanes or four on that bridge...?"

I wonder what it is about clouds and God?

**Today we have had an ancient reading, thousands of years old,
where God's presence is heard inside a cloud.....**

AND we have a Harley biker on a California highway!

mmm.....

**You know when the ancients wanted to get close to God,
and since God was "up there",
the people would climb the highest mountain around.**

If they were fortunate,

God would come down in a cloud to meet them...

And there would be a close encounter of the heavenly kind!

Now before I go to much further,

I think it is important for you to know the context of this story

**Jesus and his disciples were on their way Jerusalem which, as you know,
was the seat of power for both the Jewish Temple authorities
and the Roman Empire in Israel.**

**Just before this reading, Jesus was talking about the suffering and death that
he and his followers were walking into...**

**Jesus knew that the days ahead would hold suffering,
a lot of suffering, for all them.**

So now, just before they all set out for Jerusalem,

**Jesus invites his three closest disciples to join him up the mountain to pray...
so that they might prepare for the difficulties ahead.**

And *then* they have this profound, mysterious, mystical experience.

The three apostles see Jesus in the company of two of the greatest figures in Jewish history who are long dead: Moses and Elijah

Whoa!

Then Peter says, Master, “it is good for us to be here”!

You betcha it is!

Master, let’s make 3 dwelling places here...in other words, let’s not go to Jerusalem! Let’s not ask for trouble!

Let’s stay here, where we all feel really special and we are safe!

**Yeaah, if I was having such an experience,
and I knew what lay ahead...**

I would want to stay up there and not come back down too!

But the minute those words came from Peter’s mouth,

God, the booming voice from cloud, chastises Peter:

This is my chosen son...listen to him.

and in a flash! Jesus is alone, Peter falls silent,

**they head back down the mountain, and begin again on their way to Jerusalem
and no one told anyone what they had seen.**

While we might desire a ‘real encounter’ with God...

while we might wish for something dramatic and mystical to happen to us...

As wonderful as they are...

those mountain top experiences of God

are not the goal or destination of our lives.

**Encounters with the Holy are not the end point in and of themselves,
something to be sought after and held onto...**

**They are given to us so that we might have the grace,
the wisdom, the strength, and the courage
to continue to live with and in kindness, integrity and compassion
of our every day lives even in the face of opposition and suffering.**

**An experience of profound mystery, beauty and/or Love feels magnificent,
and *of course* we would never want it to end!**

It's soooo wonderful!

**But...We must continue to walk the *ordinary* days of our lives
always moving towards what we called to do...
always becoming more than we think we can be,
always forgiving more often than we currently know how...
and always loving larger than we think we can.**

**Now...I might suppose some of you are thinking...
but I've never had a mystical experience!
I've never had such an encounter with the Holy One...
but I wish I did....**

**May I ask you....
have you ever seen a sunrise or a sunset that took your breath away?
Have you ever been present when someone died?
Have you ever seen the pure joy in a child's smile?
Have you ever held a dear friend who was swallowed up in grief?
Have you ever felt so deeply hopeless that words and thoughts were gone, and you were just
'there'?**

**Moments of such raw emotion are the encounters with the Divine Presence which we seek
but often don't recognize.**

**We often think we need a booming voice to assure us
that God is present...**

But this is not so.

**God, indeed is not A separate and distinct from life..
but God...the Ultimate Holy Mystery is life its very self.**

As Author Paula D'Arcy puts it:

God shows up most often disguised as our life.

We are like fish swimming in water...

**God...is that reality, that mystery that is everywhere
and all-ways present...in the highlights and the lowlights of our
our ordinary lives...and everything in between...**

sigh.....how ordinary...perhaps it is a little disappointing!

But if/when we can keep our hearts, minds, eyes and ears open..

**if we are willing to see the presence of God in the ordinariness
of our everyday lives,**

we will find unimaginable gift and never ending grace...

**we find the power that created the entire Cosmos from the most far flung galaxies, to the
tiny quarks and dark energy that is embedded in us and everything else...**

and we will find we have been given all that we need for the journey ahead...

and for this! we can say Thank you! amen.