

“Behold the Glory!” 3/6 /2011

Kenmore UMC Exodus 24:12-18, Matt. 17:1-9

Rev. Dr. Peter W. LeValley

*When people, and even creation, are transformed, transfigured by God’s glory, we are to bask in God’s radiance.*

A man was driving when he saw the flash of a traffic camera. He figured that his picture had been taken for exceeding the limit, even though he knew that he was not speeding... Just to be sure, he went around the block and passed the same spot, driving even more slowly, but again the camera flashed. Now he began to think that this was quite funny, so he drove even slower as he passed the area again, but the traffic camera again flashed. He tried a fourth time with the same result. He did this a fifth time and was now laughing when the camera flashed as he rolled past, this time at a snail's pace... Two weeks later, he got five tickets in the mail for driving without a seat belt.

How well do we notice?

I have told you before about an experience I had skiing Whiteface Mountain in the Adirondacks. How I ended up one time at the top of a trail I did not want to go down, in fact thought I would maim myself if I tried, but there was no other way so I carefully skied down it and I made it. So of course having been so frightened I went back up to ski it again.

Only this time I was not so afraid and lifted my eyes beyond my fear to behold the glory of the Adirondack mountains and valleys and frozen lakes stretching out to the horizon before me. It was far more thrilling and glorious than any thrill I got from skiing that day.

Sometimes our fear immobilizes us, and keeps us from being able to behold the glory of God all around us. Sometimes our need to DO something keeps us from just being there. I will always remember a report from a Seminarian I was teaching who had gone on a “transcultural” trip to a central American Country and was given her report and she said a wise person there had reminded them that they were human beings not human doings.

Today is a day to Behold the glory of God told in two mountaintop stories of Moses and Jesus. Today is a day to listen, to remember the mountaintop experiences we have experienced when we have been in the presence of God.

On a snowy day the beauty of a field of daffodils, the brilliance of a sunrise dancing across the sky or sunlight dancing on the water;  
the pure joy of a babies deep throated laughter;  
the wonder of receiving or giving a helping hand offered in love.

The majesty captured in a painting by a brilliant artist like Raphael.  
On the high mountain Jesus’ face shining like the sun and his clothes dazzling white. The great prophets Moses and Elijah talking with him, the disciples on the ground in aweful,  
Awe – Filled fear and wonder.

The bright cloud overshadowing them and the voice,

***“This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; Listen to Him.***

I do understand why Peter wanted to capture the moment of Transfiguration, but even more I believe the power of the moment is to Simply **Behold its Glory** and be held by its wonder and love.

In fact when we do Behold the Glory of God around us and within us we don't have to capture the moment for it captures us forever.

We receive a taste of that glory this morning in this holy sacrament that Jesus came down off the mountain to share with us his glory in the midst of our lives. Just as he came down off the mountain to heal the child depicted in the lower right of Raphael's painting, so Jesus comes to us in this sacrament to fill us with his love and capture us in his glory.

Behold the glory of the Lord that shines upon us. Amen.

Robert Fulghum tells about a woman who was so stressed out she went to see a psychiatrist. After listening to her a long time, he wrote out a prescription and handed it to her. She read the words the doctor had written- "Spend one hour on Sunday watching the sunrise while walking in a cemetery." Against her better judgment she followed the advice. One morning as the sun came up, she stood in a cemetery listening to the birds and watching the world come alive all around her. She found herself in touch with her life again.

*We are to Open our eyes. ...*

Once, years ago, someone handed me a little devotional book entitled, A Touch of Wonder. Dear God, I remember whispering, I need that, I need a touch of wonder. It doesn't happen to most of us very often. But we all need some transfiguring experiences when we see what we never saw before.

II Peter 1:16 reads. *We have been eyewitnesses to the majesty*. What a wonderful thing to say about Christians and the church.