

The View from the Mountain

Intro. Visions have always been part of the religious life. People of all religious traditions have them. The Old Testament is filled with prophets and kings like Jeremiah and Solomon who had dreams or visions in which God communicated with them.

The vision quests in Native American culture are well-known as are Fatima, Guadalupe and others. A friend recently recounted his experience of a vision of bright light before coming out of post-surgical anesthesia. He said the feeling was wonderfully peaceful. He could have stayed there, but didn't. And he ponders what the meaning is. Maybe to be revealed in time.

I. The three disciples were aware of the tradition of visions, but they never expected it to happen to them. The only vision fishermen got was of their

impending death during a bad storm! They fell to the ground terrified. No one except Moses had seen God and lived. I don't believe the Lord intended to *scare* them by revealing himself the way he did. He wanted to share with them an incredible secret he was not ready to share with the other disciples. He wanted his closest friends to understand *who* he was and *what* they were part of. The appearance of the two most important figures in their tradition, Moses and Elijah, further impressed the disciples they must be having a dream. True to human nature James, Peter and John wanted to stay in that wonderful moment and live happily ever after. That's the stuff of fairy tales. We don't live permanently at the top of the mountain in this life. But we are to bring that transforming power of God back to a world in need of such a vision.

Most of us don't get such clear insights about God like the one Peter, James and John got that day on the mountain. But some of us *have* had moments of understanding that changed the direction of our lives. Maybe it was a good experience such as in prayer or because of love, suddenly seeing a new direction in life; or in tragic events such as an illness or accident that shook us to the core of our faith. There was no bright light or vision telling me to be a priest. There were a *series of events I finally connected* that convinced me to take a chance on this road. I am amazed how that insight led me to realize the presence of God in my life all along.

Concl. The three disciples didn't *ask* for this vision; they didn't even *know* to ask. It was a gift from the Lord to prepare them for his death and resurrection and their lives after. I believe we get

“visions” or insights from God that can transfigure us, change us. Some insights come without asking; others when we pray for them. They don't necessarily come immediately. The disciples did not realize the full importance of theirs until months later, *after the resurrection*. Pray for the vision, the insight that will lead to transfiguration. And cherish the visions of the mountain-top experiences. They can give us strength for when the road of life leads through the valleys and the dry places. We can recall *was it was good for us to be there and it will be again. Peter, James were never the same and **neither are we.***