

Luke 9.28-36

28Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. ***29***And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. ***30***Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. ***31***They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. ***32***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. ***33***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. ***34***While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. ***35***Then from the cloud came a voice that said, “This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!” ***36***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.

Sometimes reality comes in glimpses; like a thunderstorm on the lake or on the prairies at night. Lightning flashes and for an instant everything around you lights up. Only an instant. Sometimes life’s major branches spring from a single moment. Astrophysicists speak of singularity—the birth of a star or a star going super nova.

Peter, James and John witness singularity for an instant. Maybe commemorating it with booths would prolong the moment to better understand it. Not to be. Likewise, long sermons won’t get us any closer to understanding everything about Jesus’ transfiguration either.

The details of this singularity are meant to be savoured like fine wine, or coffee, or food—we can experience tasting notes or a flavour profile if we slow down just a bit.

For today, there is one word in the Gospel that draws us into the mystery of God’s ways. The word? Exodus. It’s there! Professor Sarah Henrich of Luther Seminary points out that the word Luke uses about the conversation about Jesus’ departure with Moses... someone who knows a thing or two about exodus and with Elijah is the word “exodus”.

Today's Gospel contains all sorts of verbal magic, words and references designed to jump start our imaginations.

So we say "Exodus", what comes to mind?

An empire's insatiable appetite for grandeur using slave labour to feed it?

Moses confronting Pharaoh's ossified heart bent on exploitation

plagues—not even plagues are enough to loosen Pharaoh's death grip.

God providing a means of escape even across the sea.

Exodus brings forty years in the wilderness.

Manna. Quail. A Golden calf. Brackish water. Stinging serpents.

The prophets say this was the golden age when people learned through life and death trial and error to trust God. The saga of escapes and perilous journeys points beyond the core experience to God's larger agenda. So does that moment as Jesus prays and is transfigured. In a glimpse radiance and glory seize our attention. Then a heavenly voice says—Look Look Here! Look at Jesus.

Three disciples who saw the earthly Jesus everyday glimpse a holiness old as time itself. In a flash they see Jesus standing before them again. The heavenly voice also says, Listen!

So we look and we listen as Jesus prepares for exodus...Jesus liberates from powers that be and that mightily resist because they benefit by keeping others in captivity. We look and we listen to Jesus as his exodus takes the form of clashes with religious and civic authorities and even unseen spiritual forces. And Jesus' exodus even as he preaches it; good news for the poor, release for the captive, sight for those who don't see, the coming of God's favour.

This liberating one calls us to follow even to Jerusalem, to death, through death to resurrection. And at time's end, God in the risen Christ brings the final exodus, the ultimate liberation of all that is captive, and the mending of all that is broken.