

Fr. Simon Sez

In today's Gospel (Luke 9:28b-36) we hear how Jesus gave His closest disciples, Peter, James and John a "mountain-top experience." As Scott Hahn points out, Moses and Elijah are the only Old Testament figures that heard the voice of God and saw the glory of God on top of a mountain. This is certainly by Divine Providence. In other words, these individuals needed an experience like this to prepare them for the mission God planned for them. These highly unusual experiences may have indicated to them that they had highly unusual callings from God to fulfill their missions in life.

These "mountain-top experiences" had to have given these men of God some pause to wonder what it all meant for them! At the end of today's gospel, we hear that the three disciples "fell silent" and did not tell anyone at that time what they had seen. This is quite understandable. Having experienced something like that would have made them feel awestruck. They also would have needed time to discuss and reflect amongst themselves what happened to them in order to "process" it before they let anybody else know about it. (In another passage, Jesus told them to not tell anyone until after the Resurrection. They did not even know what that meant!)

God works in mysterious ways as is commonly said. This is certainly true, but it does not mean that we should not even try to make some sense of it. We need to make some sense of it to learn whatever insights or lessons God is teaching us while being very careful we do not misinterpret it. Just the fact that we experience a "God moment" should give us pause to consider what it means for us.

Peter, James and John needed this "mountain-top experience," if for no other reason, to help them remain faithful to Jesus through His impending suffering and death. (Jesus told them three times that this would happen to Him.) In the transfiguration they saw the glory of God in Jesus and were told to listen to him. Even Moses and Elijah gave witness to this. No matter what happens, they can be assured Jesus tells them what they need to hear and commands control of any situation as he already had up to that point. As Peter said to Jesus in John 6:68, "Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

LENT REGULATIONS FOR CATHOLICS

All Fridays throughout the year, especially during Lent, are penitential days. Abstinence: All who have reached their 14th birthday are to abstain from eating meat on Ash Wednesday and on all Fridays of Lent. Fasting: All those who are 18 or older, until their 59th birthday, are to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Fasting is one full meal and two lesser meals without eating between meals. Jesus said to the disciples of John and the Pharisees: "But the days will come, when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast on that day." (Mark 2:20)

ANNUAL MASS ATTENDANCE SURVEY

Mass attendance counts will be taken at all weekend Masses March 12-13, 19-20, & 26-27, 2022.

The Glory in Sight: Scott Hahn Reflects on the Second Sunday of Lent



Genesis 15:5–12, 17–18
Psalm 27:1, 7–9, 13–14
Philippians 3:17–4:1
Luke 9:28–36

In today's Gospel, we go up to the mountain with Peter, John, and James. There we see Jesus "transfigured," speaking with Moses and Elijah about His "exodus."

The Greek word "exodus" means "departure." But the word is chosen deliberately here to stir our remembrance of the Israelites' flight from Egypt.

By His death and resurrection, Jesus will lead a new Exodus—liberating not only Israel but every race and people; not from bondage to Pharaoh, but from slavery to sin and death. He will lead all mankind, not to the territory promised to Abraham in today's First Reading, but to the heavenly commonwealth that Paul describes in today's Epistle.

Moses, the giver of God's law, and the great prophet Elijah, were the only Old Testament figures to hear the voice and see the glory of God atop a mountain (see Exodus 24:15–18; 1 Kings 19:8–18).

Today's scene closely resembles God's revelation to Moses, who also brought along three companions and whose face also shone brilliantly (see Exodus 24:1; 34:29). But when the divine cloud departs in today's Gospel, Moses and Elijah are gone. Only Jesus remains. He has revealed the glory of the Trinity—the voice of the Father, the glorified Son, and the Spirit in the shining cloud.

Jesus fulfills all that Moses and the prophets had come to teach and show us about God (see Luke 24:27). He is the "chosen One" promised by Isaiah (see Isaiah 42:1; Luke 23:35), the "prophet like me" that Moses had promised (see Deuteronomy 18:15; Acts 3:22–23; 7:37). Far and above that, He is the Son of God (see Psalm 2:7; Luke 3:21–23).

"Listen to Him," the Voice tells us from the cloud. If, like Abraham, we put our faith in His words, one day we too will be delivered into "the land of the living" that we sing of in today's Psalm. We will share in His resurrection, as Paul promises, our lowly bodies glorified like His.

ST. PAUL CENTER FOR BIBLICAL THEOLOGY
www.stpaulcenter.com