

*Come Holy Spirit
Use me to Your glory*

Precious Pilgrim,

*I'm on a house party with dear friends in Highlands,
North Carolina.*

Yesterday, I asked our host what time sunrise was. I wanted to be sure not to miss it this morning. I thought it would be grand to celebrate the Feast of the Transfiguration by witnessing a tranquil mountain dawning. I envisioned seeing the sun break forth in all its glory. We're staying in a home with a breathtaking view. You can see the clouds swirling around the mountains as if they were smoke signals being sent from on high. The house seems to be situated at the same altitude as the soaring birds. These fine-feathered friends effortlessly glide by, riding the air currents. Yes! The morning glory I planned to witness was going to be quite Transfigurational, I was sure. Mountains. Clouds. There was no way that it wasn't going to be memorable.

After a delightful day spent with friends, I eagerly went to bed, anticipating the sunrise. About 3:00 a.m. my husband and I were awakened by howling winds and banging shutters. Our guest room hangs on a cliff with two of its four walls windowed. We were secure, but we were totally immersed within the storm. On arrival, the first thing we had done was to open up all of the windows. We wanted to soak up the fresh,

cool, mountain air. Ah, the relief and revival it afforded after the heat and humidity of Alabama.

We had not foreseen the storm, even though the evidence of such occurrences surrounded us. During the day, I had admired the ancient cliff-hanging trees. Short. Stubby. Gnarled. They looked like large Japanese bonsai trees. I thought what a life they must lead. They seemed to have been sculptured by the storms. Now we were being allowed the privilege of getting to experience, first hand, the Artist, our Lord Himself, at work. Rolling thunder. Crashing lightning. Howling wind. Beating rain.

My husband got up and battened down the hatches. My last thought before drifting back to sleep was, "Damn, no sunrise." My little plan had been thwarted - but once again, thank goodness.

How often I try to put God in a box or try to mediocally meditate on the miraculous. Scripture says to "lean not on your own understanding." Oh, but how often I do try. This Transfiguration day I've been experiencing has been far grander and more of the Lord's making than the prepackaged plan I'd tried to come up with. It's been made up of layers upon layers of swirling clouds and fog and mystery and winding roads.

As I reflect, today seems to have been more in keeping with the actual event. I remembered that Jesus was visited on the mountain by Elijah and Moses, who helped prepare our

Lord for His upcoming journey to Jerusalem. I remembered that James and John and Peter witnessed their visitation and Christ's transfiguration. I remembered that there were clouds and mystery, and our Lord Jesus shone with brilliance. I remembered that Peter impulsively offered to build three tabernacles. I remembered that the Lord God had spoken, claiming Christ as His Son. I remembered - the actions, but not the attitudes.

After rereading the three gospel accounts, plus Peter's last declaration of faith in his second letter, written right before he died, new whiffs of meaning seemed to tenderly float through my mind. May I quote Luke 9:33-34:

And it came about, as these (Elijah and Moses) were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." - not realizing what he was saying. And while he was saying this, a cloud formed and began to overshadow them and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My Son, My Chosen One, listen to Him!"

And Matthew 17:6-8:

And when the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were much afraid. And Jesus came to them and touched them and said, "Arise and do not be afraid." And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one, except Jesus Himself, alone.

As I reflect once more upon the Transfiguration, it is God's tender mercy that stands out. I love that our Lord God sent Moses and Elijah, of all His people, to fortify and prepare His only Son, our Lord Jesus, for Jerusalem (Moses representing the Law, and Elijah representing the Prophets). What an incomprehensible, Father-God, loving gesture! I love that in the mysterious holy cloud of God's presence, Jesus' three closest friends were afraid and didn't understand. I love that Jesus met them in their fright and touched them, ministered to their needs. Our Lord said, "Arise and do not be afraid." And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus.

Cloudy days. Unknown paths. Uncharted waters. Will these be debilitatingly scary? Not, Pilgrim, if our eyes can keep focused on our Lord Jesus. Transfiguration means "a radical change in appearance." I've always thought it had solely to do with Christ's countenance. I now believe that those onlookers, who looked up into Jesus' face also were radically changed. It says, "They saw no one except Jesus." Can you imagine? "They saw no one except Jesus." I'm sure their fright instantly faded. Oh sure, it would resurface again. Peter would deny. They all would have moments of running and hiding, for they were only human, just like we are. Humanity is not tough stuff, but rather fallen and dusty material. But, ah, what can happen when we seek His face - it can be transfigurational - I believe.

"Search for the Lord and his strength; continually seek his

face." Psalm 105:4 RSV. It is a daily, hourly, moment-by-moment kind of a thing, don't you think, Pilgrim?

Now may I end our time together by reading this little poem I just wrote called "Transfiguration - Past, Present and Future."

*Shimmering brilliance, infusion of light,
Transcending comprehension, cloud veiled bright.
Jesus my Lord, companioned by two,
Moses, Elijah, fortify, renew.
Yahweh speaks. I AM proclaims.
Disciples fall, never the same.
Come Lord Jesus, transfigure us.*

Peace, Pilgrim. Have a good day.

Your sister in Christ,

Lucy