

“From the cloud came a voice: ‘This is my beloved son.’ ”

Once upon a time, there was a young mother. Now, in your mind’s eye, I want you to imagine this episode. Mom is getting breakfast ready for her young family. The kitchen is filled with sunlight. The children are laughing and talking. Dad is playing with the littlest one.

As the young mother scurries about spreading jam on toast & pouring orange juice in glasses, she is suddenly overwhelmed with joy ...and love ...for her family. This is what she dreamed of since she was a little girl ...a loving, happy family of her own. Tears fill her eyes and she becomes so choked up that she can hardly speak.

Psychologist, Dr. Abraham Maslow calls this a ‘Peak Moment.’

“It is a moment when, for a few precious seconds or minutes, we see an ordinary event in an extraordinary way.”

To clarify, it is a moment when God seems to shine through the things around us and we glimpse ...another world ...beyond this one!

The reason I bring up this ‘Peak-Moment-thing’ is ...because it helps us better understand what happened to the disciples --Peter, James, & John, on that mountain top in today’s gospel reading. They experienced a ‘Peak Moment!’

1. For a few precious minutes, they saw Jesus in a totally different way.
2. For a few precious minutes, they saw God shine through the external person of Jesus!
3. For a few precious minutes, they got a glimpse of a world beyond this one.
4. For a few precious minutes, they saw, from the outside of Jesus, what he really was on the inside: the magnificent, glorious, beautiful, beloved Son of God –as was declared by the voice from within that cloud!

Has anyone ever explained to you the remarkable similarity between the Transfiguration and the Agony in the Garden? Well –brace yourself, ‘cause here it comes!

1. Both of these events took place on a mountain. The agony in the garden took place on Mount Olives. The transfiguration took place on Mount Tabor.
2. Both events took place at about the same time ...each at night.
3. At both events, the apostles fell asleep, while Jesus stayed awake...& prayed.
4. Finally, both events were witnessed by the same 3 apostles: Peter, James, & John.

And this, very conveniently, brings me to the CONNECTION between the two events.

On Mount Tabor, the 3 apostles saw Jesus in a moment of ecstasy, when Jesus’ divinity shown through him in a way that it had never done before.

On the Mount of Olives, the same 3 saw Jesus in a moment of agony, when his humanity shown through him in a way it had never done before.

Jesus’ ecstasy on Mt. Tabor and his agony on Mt. Olives are COMPLIMENTARY events. They are inseparable sides of the same coin. They show the total Jesus in a total way: his humanity and his divinity!

It is right here that these 2-mountain events have an extraordinarily, important message for each of us. **What, exactly, is that message? I am glad you asked that question!**

You see, again brace yourself ...like Jesus, we TOO have a twofold dimension about us! In each of us, there's something that is human and there's something that is divine, though in far from equal parts.

To clarify, there is a spark of Adam and a spark of God in each of us. The 'spark of God' that is in us --is not IN our soul; it IS our soul. THAT is the part of us that is 'made to the image and likeness of God!'

And, like Jesus on Mt. Tabor, we too experience moments of ecstasy, when the spark of God shines through us so brightly, it almost blinds us. At such times, we feel so close to God, we feel we could reach out and touch Him.

But, on the other hand, like Jesus on the Mt. of Olives, we also experience moments of agony, when the spark of Adam surfaces, so sharply, that the spark of God in us flickers so dimly that it seems to almost go out and die. At such times, we feel so far away from God that we wonder --if ...He ...even ...exists!

Now here's the message: When these moments of ecstasy and agony come --these extremes--we should recall the two mountain-events of Jesus: Mt. Tabor & Mt. Olives. We should recall that Jesus experienced these same highs & lows in his life. He un-der-stands!

We should recall something else. We should recall that during both these two events... --his ecstasy and his agony --Jesus prayed.

If this is the way that Jesus responded during such extremes, it should also be the way that we respond at such times. If it was good enough for him ...it, most definitely, should be good enough for us.

*And, I should think ...that, if we respond to them with **prayer**, like Jesus during his transfiguration, we too will hear God say of us ...what He said of Jesus, his son,*

"This is my beloved son/This is my beloved daughter."

And, like Jesus during his agony, we too will experience what Jesus experienced in the garden: the touch of the Father's healing hand--& the courage to go on ...no matter what!

May Almighty God, our Abba, bless you, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.