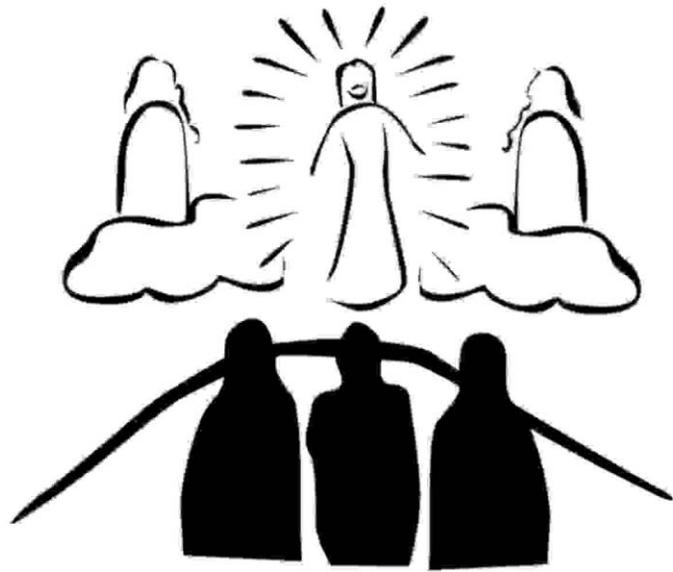


Discernment was so easy when Jesus was physically present with us on Earth. Apparently. For Jesus. He prayed, and his face shone, and his clothes took on a radiant glow. Wouldn't that be great for us? We could pray, "God, tell me what you want me to do. Should I take the new job offer or just retire?" And our whole person would light up to reveal which choice to make.



As if!

Of course, being set aglow, in **transfigurational discernment** as Jesus was in today's gospel lesson, might be a disadvantage for us if we didn't WANT to have God's will made crystal clear. "Really, God? Take the new job? I was all ready to retire. But maybe I'm just standing in direct sunlight instead of all lit up. Let me move over here a little more." <laughing>

So what was Jesus up to on his quest of **transfigurational discernment**? Jesus needed to plan his "departure," as our lesson says, "which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem." This word "departure," as used here, is actually the word "exodus."

We know what "exodus" is. Exodus is "escape from slavery in Egypt and entry into a new place that God has promised to give us." That's the great part. Some ... change ... is required to accomplish exodus, though.

If you remember the original Exodus, the one that began to define the Israelites as a people, there were (um) inducements for Pharaoh to let them go. There was standing up to power. There were plagues. There was packing on a massive scale—deciding what to take and what to leave behind. There was fear. There was time in the wilderness, and then there was murmuring. Lots of murmuring. For example, the people asked God, "Did you send us out of Egypt to DIE here in the wilderness? Why didn't you zip us right over to our new place? And oh by the way, God, the food you are giving us each day is lousy. We were better off as slaves!"

To which God said, “Didn’t you cry to me in Egypt that you’d rather die trying to reach a new place than to wither away in the old one? Didn’t you know that discernment leads to a new place, and change is required to get there?”

That was the original Exodus, when a whole tribe of depressed and discouraged people were transfigured onto God’s hands and feet and heart. In today’s gospel lesson, Jesus wasn’t about to be picked up by a spaceship in Jerusalem—his coming exodus by crucifixion wasn’t going to be easy. So, he went to the mountain to pray. And he took three disciples with him. Because, you know, and I know, that exoduses are marginally easier to contemplate if we are not alone.

So here were Peter, James, and John on the mountain top with Jesus. Jesus was dazzlingly brilliant, bathed in the glow of God’s approval, the light making crystal clear what God needed Jesus to accomplish: exodus. Confront power in Jerusalem, come what might. Leave the comfort of home and adjust to a new reality. Accomplish Mission Earth, the mission that God gave Christ Jesus to accomplish here among us, and make his escape from this life.

Even Jesus didn’t figure out how to make HIS exodus alone. He consulted two experts: Moses and Elijah. Whatever else these two represented, Moses was a powerful symbol of Israel’s past redemption, and Elijah was a powerful symbol of Israel’s future redemption.

WHAT? I’ll bet that’s not what you expected me to say. You’re all scripture savvy, so you probably expected me to tell you that, according to prophecy, Moses and Elijah were to return before the Messiah came. And here they were! And here the Messiah was! I would have told you that, but you already knew that Jesus’ Transfiguration was fulfillment of that particular Messianic prophecy.

So instead I’ll tell you what else links Moses and Elijah and Jesus: redemption. By leading Israel’s first exodus, Moses knew a thing or two about what would motivate people to leave their comfort zones in response to God’s call. And Elijah is the prophet, according to Malachi 4:5-6, who knew what would cause people to renew their covenant with God.

Because we know what Christ Jesus accomplished on his Earth Mission, we know that Jesus was a vital connection between past and future redemption of all people. To give Moses’ work lasting meaning and to give Elijah’s work opportunity to come to fruition, Jesus had a vital mission to perform. And Jesus accomplished HIS redemption mission, beginning right here on this mountain. Jesus accepted his life’s work of redemption and God strengthened him to

accomplish that mission. That's what I call **transfigurational discernment**, figuring out what our God-given purpose is in life, and being strengthened to carry out that purpose so that we can make our personal exodus into the next phase of our life.

So, what is OUR mission? I trust that you have or will discern your individual mission before the day your personal exodus arrives. I am always happy to accompany you in that discernment so that, at the end of YOUR Mission Earth you will know you accomplished what you were given life here to do.

Maybe Moses and Elijah would be available to US here at Church of the Resurrection for **transfigurational discernment** consultation. But I don't think so. First, WE are not the Messiah. And second, the voice from heaven told us who to consult: "[Jesus] is God's Chosen—listen to him."

I do not expect that our coming journey to carry out our affordable housing mission will be easy or unanimous. But you can be sure that the experience will change us as a congregation, change us for the better, in miraculous ways. We can be sure that, if we have discerned correctly, God will continue to provide all that is needed to accomplish the mission given us to do, transfiguring us in surprising ways (and undoubtedly our neighbors, as well).