



**Last Sunday of the Season of Epiphany February 7, 2016**  
**St. Catherine's Church, North Vancouver**

**Luke 9:28-36**

About eight days after Peter had acknowledged Jesus as the Christ of God, Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. 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. 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. While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" 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.

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I can only imagine how you're feeling this morning as you try to absorb the news of the arrest of your interim priest, The Rev. Gordon Dominey, by the authorities in Edmonton. For me, the last few days have been a combination of shock, worry and, of course, concern for those bringing the allegations, and for all involved in the case in Edmonton, concern for this parish and concern for Gordon, himself.

And so here we all are, with many, many questions and feelings about what happened all those many years ago and what happened more recently. Here we are with questions and feelings about what will happen in and around this circumstance, and about what it all means for us as Christians, both in the broader diocesan community and right here at St. Catherine's. As we ask these questions it seems to me that we're holding a number of things in our hands at the same time: the feelings of grief or anger or confusion that come with hearing shocking news about someone we know, the feelings of empathy and even identification with those bringing allegations, and, then, because we are Christians, the question of where God is in this situation.

And so, I want to say something about each of these three things:

First, whatever feelings you and I and others are having are simply *the feelings that we're having*. In my view, we need to accept the full range of these feelings without judgement. They just are. Those of us here this morning representing the broader diocese will do everything we can to answer your questions and to be with you in whatever feelings you're having, either about the situation, itself, or about what you learned this morning. We too are struggling with our feelings, and we want to stand with you as you struggle with yours.

Second, many of you this morning may be thinking about and feeling for those who have brought forth the allegations. Others of you may actually have something in your own personal experience that the allegations touch on. Please know that should this be the case, you can be in touch with Archdeacon Lynne McNaughton or myself. We will find ways for you to be able to share what's coming up for you as well as receive the pastoral care you may need.

And finally, and importantly, as Christians, as Anglicans, as the people of St. Catherine's and the Diocese of New Westminster, where, we are wondering, is God in this situation? Part of me wants to say that we cannot fully know. For where God is in difficult, painful, heartbreaking situations unfolds gradually over time and is often understood, if at all, through much pondering, much searching and through many tears.

But another part of me wants to say this:

Once Jesus took three of his disciples up on a mountaintop to pray. He did this because he was facing a difficult time and needed to pray with his friends. Once they got there, the disciples saw him in a way they had never seen him before: in his full glory, with shining clothes and with his weary face changed into something beautiful and full of radiance. Then suddenly, they also thought they saw Moses and Elijah standing beside him and all three of them seemingly full of light.

Seeing this, Peter, weary from his complicated and unrelenting life, had a bright idea. He tried to prolong the mountaintop moment and suggested that they build three booths there: one for Jesus, one for Moses, and one for Elijah. But this was not meant to be; the mountaintop glory was not intended to be prolonged. For as Peter was suggesting this, Moses and Elijah disappeared, and a voice from heaven declared "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" With these words still ringing in their ears, then, Jesus and his

disciples made their way back down the mountain to return to world below, the world where you and I actually live.

Where is God in this situation? What our Gospel for today suggests is that while mountaintop experiences can renew and inspire us, God is most with us in the lives we live off the mountaintop, in the lives we live down in the valley where we feel confused and unsure which way to turn, where bad surprises happen and we struggle to deal with them, and where suffering happens but never has the last word. God lives with us down in the valley. God lives with us here down in our valley.

But in the valley we must also remember the words declared upon the mountaintop: “This is my son, my Chosen. Listen to him!” We must remember to listen to him: not only to his words but to the witness of his life. We must listen to him.

We must listen to him and pray. For he was a person immersed in prayer.  
We must listen to him and love one another. For he came to knit us together in love.  
We must listen to him and hope. For his life, death and resurrection, opened for us a new way of freedom and life.