

[Spirituality](#)
[Pencil Preaching](#)



by Pat Marrin

[View Author Profile](#)
[patrickjmarrin@gmail.com.](mailto:patrickjmarrin@gmail.com)

[**Join the Conversation**](#)

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. [Learn more](#)

August 5, 2019



“This is my chosen Son; listen to him” (Luke 9:35).

Luke wants us to see the connection between several scenes in his Gospel so we will understand the key to Jesus’ identity. The first scene is Jesus’s baptism, the second is today’s account of the Transfiguration, and the third is the stranger’s revelation to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus.

The baptism and the Transfiguration are linked by the theophany of the overshadowing cloud and the Voice that calls Jesus the beloved, or chosen, Son. The Transfiguration and the story of Emmaus are linked by the mention of Moses and Elijah representing the Law and the Prophets. The mysterious stranger on the road tells the two disciples that Jesus’ death fulfilled the Law and Prophets, the very topic Moses and Elijah discuss with Jesus at his Transfiguration. This was the key that opened the eyes of the early church to the meaning of Jesus’ apparent failure on the cross followed by his mysterious triumph.

This understanding is there all along, but hidden. Peter, James and John, representing church leadership, were chosen witnesses, but they fall asleep, as they will later succumb in the garden when Jesus is conversing with his Father about the cup of suffering he is about to drink. They witness the Transfiguration but are so stunned they tell no one what they had seen. Only when they have passed through the dark night of doubt and despair will it dawn on them what Jesus had told them and begin to put together all the pieces to the puzzle of his identity and God's plan to overcome sin and death by suffering love.

The truth about Jesus comes to us in the same way. Like the first disciples, we want a straight path to victory and a simple explanation of how God works in our lives. When suffering comes, it does not meet our expectations or make sense. The puzzle pieces do not fit, we grow weary and silent or, like the travelers to Emmaus, lose hope.

Today's solemn feast reassures us that no matter what happens, God is present and guiding us through the passage every disciple must endure to know the real Jesus and the authentic Gospel. No matter how high the mountain, how dark the overshadowing cloud, whether Jesus comes to us in brilliant clarity or blinding familiarity, as friend or stranger, we are on our way because we are with him, and he will never abandon us. In his company, we, too, are beloved and chosen.

Advertisement