

Jesus goes on a long walk up a mountain with his friends, and his friends are terrified. When we're terrified, sometimes we think and do ridiculous things. If we're lucky, we have a friend in the moment of terror who can speak peace to us and talk us down from doing the ridiculous thing. If we're lucky, we have friends with whom we can keep silence over the awe and wonder of a mountaintop experience. If we're lucky, we have friends with whom we can talk over the mystery, we have friends with whom we can do the work that Jesus calls us to do when we have left the terror behind us.

In preparation for this particular Transfiguration Sunday, I found myself reflecting on my own experience the last couple of years. Many of you know that I have recently dealt with breast cancer. Sheer terror and I now have a more intimate relationship than we ever have before. Last April, as I was preparing to undergo 20 rounds of radiation, I recognized that I really needed to connect with other women who have also recently dealt with breast cancer. I also knew that there were thousands, if not millions, of women who have also dealt with this particular cancer, and I needed a chance to connect with someone whose children were not yet college-age or older, someone with whom I have more in common than "just" cancer. Sisters and brothers in Christ, I have to tell you that something miraculous happened. I put the name of one of my favorite podcasters and authors into the search engine on breastcancer.org, and sent individual messages to three women based on that search. Only one wrote back. And that friend, that divine and miraculous friendship has changed my life. Thanks to the wonders of communication technology, even though we've never met in person, it is a healing and life-giving friendship that nourishes my heart, mind, and soul. It is a miraculous friendship that supports and grounds me in my marriage, in my parenting, and in my relationships in my extended family, friendships, and wider community.

While it's not the same, I also can't un-see the parallels to today's gospel. And my guess is that you, too, might be able to find some parallels in your own life. To be human is to become acquainted with terror at some, if not many, points in our lives. God does not promise us a life free from emotion. God does not promise us a life free from terror. What God promises is to be with us, in every moment of our lives. God promises revelation – revelation of God's very self, revelation of our identities as God's own, as God's beloved. After that long walk up the mountain, Jesus' identity as God's beloved is revealed in a radically new way. His friends experience it and are completely awe-struck. His friends, in their wonder and terror, want to encapsulate and preserve this revelation. They want to stay on the mountain top, where they see not only Jesus' true identity, but they also experience

the profound and awe-inspiring presence of their spiritual ancestors, Moses and Elijah.

Jesus, in his wisdom, doesn't let his friends act on their foolish and terrorized impulses. He invites them into a holy silence, and leads them back down the mountain, back to the place where they are to continue to live out God's purposes by healing people and teaching people about God's ways.

The work they do before and after the mountain is not actually profoundly different. In the gospel of Mark, healings have already taken place. More take place after the mountaintop experience. But everything is different because of what they have experienced. Everything is different because they see and know Jesus more fully for who he is.

This knowledge of who and whose Jesus is shapes the writer of the letter to the church in Corinth that we read today. The author makes a bold assertion: that God's light is hiding in plain sight. God's light, the Good News of the presence and love of God in Jesus Christ, is around and within and among us. It's ready to be experienced by anyone who is awake and open to it. And it is hidden to those whose bodies may be working, but whose minds are dead and blind to the work of God.

The Good News is that deadness and blindness are not all there is. The light of God's love can shine in the darkest of corners. The goodness and light of God as embodied in the love of Jesus Christ is ours, here and now. Ours to receive and relish. Ours to share with the world in our everyday words and actions. May we, this week, live our lives in the light of Jesus. Let us give thanks for and share the miracles of God's provision and revelation. Amen.