

The Feast of the Transfiguration

August 6, 2006

Exodus 34:29-35

Psalms 99 or 99:5-9

2 Peter 1:13-21

Luke 9:28-36

In the name of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

I really don't like to drive at night any more. I don't enjoy it, and it's stressful. I suppose it has to do with age; my eyes simply aren't as good as they used to be. It could also be a matter of knowing about my own mortality. Years ago, when I was immortal, and probably invincible, I could drive all night. At some point, I'm not sure just when, it occurred to me that to be out in the middle of nowhere in the dark alone at three in the morning might not be very smart.

So I avoid it. Of course, I can't always avoid it. Sometimes there are delays and problems, things over which I have no control that put me on the road much later than I'd like on country roads in the dark.

Dark it is, indeed. Have you ever noticed that there's a lot of the "middle of nowhere" in the state of Georgia? There's a sort of vast empty space in the middle of the state – just sand and scruffy little pine trees. I suppose the land isn't good for farming, so there's no real reason for anyone to live there. You can drive a long, long way in complete darkness. It can be really spooky.

Perhaps you've been there. If you have, you know how good it is to see any small light in that darkness. I imagine the light could be a

house or a barn. I've never really investigated. The important thing is that it's there. The important thing is to know that I'm not alone in that darkness, that someone else is there, and that if I really were in trouble and needed help, I might be able to go to that light. If I did go to that light, what would I find? I have no idea; that's where faith comes in.

You know where I'm going with this don't you? Let's agree that life is a road; that's a good, well-worn, metaphor. We start at point A, birth, and proceed to point Z, death, and we log a lot of miles in between. Sometimes the going is really good; a straight, smooth road, brilliant sunshine, fleecy little clouds, perhaps a few happy bluebirds. Life is great. But if we are honest, sometimes the going is awful. It's a twisting, bumpy road, and you're driving on it in darkness because things beyond your control have changed your life, and your plans haven't worked out, and your windshield is plastered with love bugs, and you can't see where you're going. We all know what it's like. What, or who, is the light in that kind of darkness?

This is the Feast of the Transfiguration. Jesus and His three closest disciples go up a mountain to pray, and there they encounter Moses and Elijah, The Law and The Prophets. Moses and Elijah have, in their own time, come very close to God. Moses met God on another mountaintop. He received The Commandments from God, and the encounter caused his face to shine with a dazzling brightness. Elijah was taken up to God in a flaming chariot with fiery horses, another brilliant and dazzling light in the presence of God. Now, on this mountain of Transfiguration, a cloud descends. The cloud is the "glory," the *shekinah* that is God's presence, and it descends upon the mountain and upon Jesus. When it dissipates, Jesus alone remains with His faithful three. His face and His garments are dazzling. He becomes the light itself.

Jesus is the light here now in this darkness or ours whatever it may be. Jesus is the one, the only one, who can draw us from that darkness; draw the world from its darkness. We must have the light.

We cannot live without light. What would the world be like without a flicker of compassion? What would the world be like without a glimmer of reason? What would the world be like without a spark of love? What would the road be like without light in the darkness to tell us we are not alone and to guide us to our journey's end?

The light tells us that after all is said and done, there will be a new day, a new dawn.

In His Holy Name.