

CRIBB<S> NOTE – FEBRUARY 3, 2008

Strange things happen in life; things not easily explained take place in front of us that leave us leery of telling others. If we told everything we have encountered out of the ordinary, there is a very high probability someone who loves us dearly will reserve a special place for us in a secured, solitary environment. In other words, we would be put away and allowed timed, weekly visits from people on the outside. So, we keep a lot of stuff to ourselves and really hope we never have the urge to blurt out what we know was a close encounter with the inexplicable.

As we read the biblical story headlined, “The Transfiguration,” a very wise and caring Jesus instructed three of his disciples not to say a word about their experience on the holy mountain. He told them to keep what they saw and heard only to themselves until after he had been crucified and resurrected. It probably was comforting to be relieved of trying to explain the thick cloud that covered them; the appearances of Moses and Elijah; and the Voice that proclaimed, “This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!”

Every encounter of a significant moment is not necessarily ‘out-of-this-world.’ We have small, everyday events that change lives. A conversation with a child or an elder; a long walk; a special sunset can set into motion ideas, visions, a sense of hope and renewal that allow us to see the world differently.

In fact, someone may stand in front of us and say something that gives us pause. You may be reminded of a forgotten connection with a person whose life was touched in a way you never imagined. Your surprise is sufficient evidence a sacred interlude of time has occurred.

We are bombarded with so much talk about uncertainty that it leaves us wondering what might happen next. On the one hand, we are called to pay attention to things around us. On the other hand, we sense urgency.

There is a third way to receive the numerous alerts. We can live with an expectation of surprising joy. The unknown allows us to imagine the possibility of goodness and we are given opportunities to exceed our potential to perform s/heroic feats. The gift of creativity can be activated to prepare us for almost any impending event.

We need not lose heart or give in to the allure of fear and dread. We have another way to go forward with the assurance God goes ahead of us and provides the Comfort of the Holy Spirit to fill our lives with peace beyond understanding. That is not easily explained but it is realized because of God’s faithfulness and truth.

A holy encounter may overwhelm us at first, but in the words of Jesus, “Get up and do not be afraid.” We have work that must be done to share Good News with those who have lost hope.

Look into the faces and listen to the voices of people around you. Appreciate the special talents each of us possesses. Offer yourself as an authentic presence of care and concern to someone who can’t believe anyone is noticing them. Then, enjoy the transformation in front of you as the human soul is touched and the blossom of God’s delicate creature emerges. That is an inexplicable holy encounter.

-Pastor Art Cribbs