

**AUDIO SCRIPT #3**

***Mountains: The Glory-Space of God***

To deepen our understanding of the spirituality of place, I share this quote from the writer D.H. Lawrence.

*“There have always existed some places on earth that have a special energy about them. These are places we pilgrimage to, that we believe provide access to the mystical. What gives these places their power? Do they form through human faith, or are they a property of the earth? ... Different places on the face of the earth have different vital effluence, a different vibration of chemical exhalation, a different polarity with the stars; call it what you like. But the spirit of a place is a great reality.”* –D.H. Lawrence, 20th century writer

For the ancient People of God, God was in the desert and the mountains, in the storms at sea and in the soft breezes in quiet places. What gives these places their power? What’s going on that the geography of these outer places touches the inner geography of our soul?

Today we are **Entering the Landscape of Mountains**. And we carry these questions with us.

Two mountains come to my mind.

Where I grew up in Lake Ainslie, Cape Breton we had a “mountain” we called “The Bald Mountain.” A fire before I was born stripped the top of all trees. It was an adventure to climb the mountain and, as teenagers, it was the entertainment we offered our American cousins.

Over the road, through the field, past the forsaken homestead, past the barite mines, steadily climbing around the side and then you were there. From the top you could look down on the Lake and see a good distance in both directions from our house. It offered perspective.

In Israel I was fortunate to climb Mount Tabor. By tradition the transfiguration (Mark 9:2-8) took place on this mountain. It was a damp and foggy day as we climbed the steep sides of the mountain that looks like an upside down tea cup. A priest from Montreal greeted us (upon overhearing our Canadian

accent) and showed us the Basilica of the Transfiguration with its beautiful mosaics. This mountaintop was a place of majesty and silence.

It was coming down from the mountain that most interested me. I remembered a sermon I preached in Theological College (Queens) on the story that immediately follows the Transfiguration. Jesus returns to the Valley and is met by a man with a sick child. (Luke 9:37-43) The mountaintop "high" is left behind in the chaos and demands of life. This too is part of the metaphor of mountain landscape: high points and valleys. Perhaps more significant than what we experience as an mountaintop experience is how we live in the Valley.

I came across this quote that really spoke to me as I prepared this:

*One climbs, one sees.*

*One descends, one sees no longer, but one has seen.*

*There is an art in conducting oneself in lower regions  
by memory of what one has seen higher up.*

*When one can no longer see, one can at least know."* Rene Daumal

Mountains hold memory. We are invited this week to wonder about what, for a moment, you saw on your last mountaintop experience and how can it sustain you in a time of being in the Valley?

Perhaps you are now on the mountain. What is the view from the summit? What kind of energy is it generating in you?

Mountains are a rich landscape and full of metaphor for our soul. They are challenging to climb. They offer vision from the peak. Mountains are often the glory-space of God, God's choice for revelation and disclosure. Mountains are the abiding place of silence; a place of listening for the heartbeat of God. Mountains stand for memory. "As old as the hills," we say. Mountains speak the language of majesty.

We have a lot of images to explore this week. May your time be blessed as we trace the character of God on mountain paths.