

Feb. 7, 2016 "The Middle of a Long Night" based on Luke 9:28-36

Quote by the late Andy Rooney: "The middle of the night seems longer than it used to be."

- Many can relate to that. We've woken up in the middle of the night with anxiety or worry.
- The disciples were in the middle of the night after what Jesus said just before this passage. He asserted that he was the Messiah, but he, this Messiah, would not be honored, but would suffer and die.
- This was a 'nightmare' for the disciples, who had left everything to follow Jesus. Next days were filled with concern, and 'about 8 days after Jesus said this, the transfiguration took place.'

All of us have experienced long nights when hopes have been dashed and hearts filled with dread

- Story of Oriental restaurant opening. Waitress knew it would be successful because the owner had literally had to climb over a mountain to escape a totalitarian regime.
- We admire people who have gone through hardship and travail to accomplish goals.
- Sometimes its persecution, but may be a health issue, or loss of a loved one, or a monetary crisis, or a deep disappointment. Hard to hold on to the promises of God.
- That's exactly what the disciples suffered. But God gave them hope, a dawn, a beginning. The experience of the mountaintop caused them to overcome their affliction.
- Book of Revelation, one of the most bizarre and terrifying books ever written, raises up the 'throne of God' with hosts of angels singing constant praises to the Holy One. It gave the early Christians hope during the great persecutions of the Roman emperor Domitian.

We're constantly besieged by obstacles and challenges in our lives, but we are given signs of hope and choices to make. Some lead to deeper faith, others to question our faith, but the glimpses that God gives reassure us of God's constant love. May be a beautiful sunset, a magnificent musical presentation, a priceless painting, or Jesus' body and blood at Communion. God comes to us through all kinds of means, if we pray and keep our eyes open. May God continue to nourish and fortify our faith. Amen.