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How many times have I climbed with Peter, James and John as they followed Jesus up that high mountain? "Lord, it is good for us to be here," they said at the Transfiguration. My climb up that mountain to confer with Jesus, however, has been quite different.

One of the invitations that God extends is to pay attention, to be aware of how our creator works in unassuming ways. I'm sure that when Jesus invited his friends to walk with him up the mountain, they had no idea what to expect. "Is Jesus going to talk to us about his future plans? Did we do something wrong, and Jesus wants to speak to us in private?" What they may not have realized is that Jesus wanted their companionship. He wanted to share an important experience with them.

I put myself in this scenario quite often, because Jesus has asked me, too, to come up the mountain with him.

A few years before I turned 80, I thought seriously about my future. I have never married. I have no children to care for me. What am I to do as I continue aging? I sat on my own mount with Jesus. I had been living in a third floor walk-up apartment for over 20 years and knew my aging body could not handle it much longer. So, I sat on my mountain and spoke quite frankly with God. "What is your future for me?" I pleaded.

Just as Jesus led his friends up a mountain to show them how sacrifice can lead to love, I felt that God was asking the same of me. God wanted me to search for my final earthly home, where my own needs would be filled and I would also have the opportunity to be of spiritual and physical help to others. So began the search!

In a casual conversation I mentioned my meandering thoughts in prayer to my friend Veronica. Like me, Veronica is retired and single with no children. We decided together to embark on climbing the mountain of searching for a senior residence that would house us, individually, for the rest of our lives. Like Peter, James and John, we followed Jesus up the mountain together. That is what a good friendship does.

For days, I prayed. I admit that I'd hoped Jesus would lead me as he did Peter, James and John: directly up a pathway to present me with plans for my new home. But alas, Jesus instead reminded me of previous words he'd spoken: "Seek and you shall find."

As I reread the episode of the Transfiguration, I remembered Jesus' friends were frightened. They hid their faces instead of listening to God'' message. And what does Jesus do? He gently touches them and tells them not to be afraid.

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Veronica and I made a good pair. We charted six places that we planned to visit. So many doors opened with opportunities for new growing experiences, intellectually and socially. Yet, spiritual and financial disappointments also came. I often found myself in a low valley rather than on a mountaintop. Like Peter, I wanted to build a home that would last forever, but I realized that "forever" is not here on earth. This journey down the mountain with Jesus seemed dry, disappointing and frustrating. I needed to practice the virtue of patience I'd received in confirmation many years before.

My eyes and heart were opened when Veronica and I discovered a place with individual apartments, an interfaith chapel that offered Mass several times a week, opportunities for intellectual and cultural endeavors, a neighborly environment and a financial plan that I could handle. The apartment I chose faces a huge mountain.

I often think that Jesus planted me here so that he could invite me to be with God on this mountainside. In Peter's words: "Lord, it is good for us to be here."

I am not afraid to stretch, to climb another mountain, because I know I am not alone. My new home is an extended neighborhood. God has been an intimate part of my discernment. My journey choosing a retirement home shares similarities with mountain climbing: the doubts that puncture decisions, the fear of making a huge mistake. But Jesus told me not to be afraid, and so I kept climbing.