

I *may* have *mentioned* this book before in *another* context –

But it's just *pounding* on the door of my mind & heart after hearing today's *Gospel*.

It's a *children's* book I found when I taught *reading* to kids behind *grade* level.

It's called *The Dot*.

A girl named *Vashti* was sitting in *visible* frustration in her *art* class –

A *frown* on her face –

Her arms *firmly* *crossed* –

Her eyes *squinting* from her *cringed* face –

Staring *down* at her *blank* paper –

While everyone *else* was happily *drawing* on *theirs*.

The teacher *disarmed* the child, joking:

Ah! A polar bear in winter!

And *Vashti* got *comfortable* enough to confess:

I just can't draw!

The *teacher* said:

Just make a mark and see where it takes you.

So, the frustrated child *took* a black marker in her fist,

And she *jabbed* the paper –

Leaving *one, solitary dot*.

The teacher didn't get upset or see what the child *lacked* in her art project.

She saw what *could* be.

She had Vashti *sign* her dot.

And she put it in a gold *frame* – hung over her desk in the front of the room.

When Vashti *saw* this,

She grew *confident* that she could make *better* dots –

Until she had an entire *portfolio* of artistic expression on display at the school art show.

A little *boy* saw her work and said:

*I wish I could draw. I can't even make a straight **line**.*

But *Vashti* told him: *just make your **mark** and see where it will go!*

My friends,

We are children of the *light* –

The Light of *Christ* – come to *scatter* the darkness.

From the darkness of our fears –

Our *frustrations* –

We can be *paralyzed* by *discouragement* –

And be *unable* to truly *see*.

Jesus brings His inner *circle* – *Peter, James, and John* –

Up a *high* mountain –

Mount Tabor –

I've *been* up there –

It took a caravan of minivans to get up there –

A *bus* couldn't go because of the 17 hairpin turns scaling the great height –

From which you could see the *Mediterranean* on a clear day.

From there, Jesus revealed who He *was* to His friends –

The Beloved Son of *God* –

Our *light!*

Jesus *entered* human flesh to enter our *sufferings* –

Our darkness –

Our doubts –

Even our death.

Only to *transfigure* us in His *light* –

His *love* –

His eternal *life.*

From the *moment* He *met* His friends –

He *knew* what He was about –

That He *came* here –

To make His way to the *cross.*

And He *knew* we'd be *distressed* and *discouraged* –

And be at risk of *perishing* in the *dark* of that Good Friday.

And so,

He *encourages* us by a *glimpse* of His great light –

The light of the *Resurrection* –

that *steadies* us in the *dark* times of life.

Peter, James, and John were *afraid* at the *awesomeness* of that divine *encounter*.

But what *happens*?

Jesus *touches* them.

Tells them to *Rise!*

And *do not be afraid!*

We are the ones transfigured in *Christ's light*.

It's the light of *faith* – when times seem *perilous*;

The light of *hope* – in our *uncertainty*;

The light of *love* – when we think we're on our *own*.

May we *see* by this light, and *not* be afraid to carry *on* in the world.

May we *climb* the mountain to be *close* to the God of *life* –

And when we have to climb back *down* that mountain –

May we *carry* that light *with* us.

May we make our *mark* on the world –

The mark of one who has *bore* crosses –

Yet who has *seen* with eyes of faith – the light of the *Resurrection*.

May we not allow the *darkness* to *own* us –

Or to *blind* us to our *share* in Christ as God's *beloved*.

We are *not* defined by what we *lack* –

But by who we *gain* in Christ Jesus.

May we *rise* from fear, uncertainty; indifference.

May we *not* be afraid –

Take an *honest* look at our hearts and the sins that make them *heavy* –

And *let* Christ's light *lift* them to breathe *free* again in *confession*.

May we *not* be afraid to *sacrifice* out of love –

Or to be *vulnerable* –

Letting others see our *mark* –

The mark of *faith* in the light of Christ – come to *scatter* the darkness.