

# Worship-at-home

February 27, 2022  
Transfiguration Sunday

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## “Quotidian Mystics”

**Call to worship:** Psalm 99

**Hymn:** #187 “We have come at Christ’s own bidding”  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xP\\_V2Edi7m8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xP_V2Edi7m8)  
(First United Church of Arvada)

**Prayers of Praise, Confession, and Supplication:**

*Lord, you are present  
and at work in your world.  
We need you to open our eyes  
to the glory of your presence:  
to stir our minds to your grace.*

*Then, take our hands  
and work through us.  
Touch our mouths  
and speak through us.  
Warm our hearts  
and love through us.  
Lord, as you abide in us,  
may we reveal you to others  
and see you in others.<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup>David Adam, *Encompassing God*, 43, “God with us”.

God of mercy:  
You have called us to be thankful  
for your good gifts to us,  
but too often we have taken them for granted  
as if we deserved them.

You have called us to be hopeful  
through the gospel of Jesus Christ,  
but too often despair has come upon us,  
and the cares of the world  
have weighed us down.

You have called us to be joyful  
in the wonder of your presence among us,  
but too often we become mired in the mundane  
and lose the gift of reverence.

By your saving power, O God,  
enable us to celebrate your love for us  
with joy and thanksgiving.

### **Assurance of Pardon:**

Do not be afraid. God's forgiveness shines into the world.  
The morning star rises in our hearts and we are made new.  
Know that you are forgiven and forgive one another in Christ's name.

Accept God's pardon,  
be at peace with God,  
at peace with one another,  
and at peace with yourself.

Give thanks to the Lord,  
for He is good,  
His love endures forever.  
Amen.

**Hymn:** "Never let go of me"

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJgIPk\\_NkZY&list=PL\\_k-IsPh7WyOqIonJRmqN7yXi\\_SU\\_1O5b&index=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJgIPk_NkZY&list=PL_k-IsPh7WyOqIonJRmqN7yXi_SU_1O5b&index=1)  
(Shipwrecked VBS)

### **The Word of God:**

*God of wisdom, we long to hear your holy Word in new and fresh ways.  
Open our ears to hear your call.  
Open our minds to understand your truth.  
Open our eyes to the work of your kingdom and equip us to take our part. Amen.*

Quotidian Mystics

READ EXODUS 34:29-35

LUKE 9:28-37, 51

2<sup>nd</sup> CORINTHIANS 3:12-18.

**1.** Moses went up on Mt. Sinai and met the Lord. The cloud of the divine Presence encircled him, and the Voice gave Moses instructions for living Holy to the Lord in a world of many competing religions and practices.

When he came down from the mountain, his face radiated with the glory of the Lord. It was as if God Himself was shining through Moses' pores and speaking through Moses' mouth.

After speaking God's words to the people, Moses covered his face with a veil.

The apostle Paul supposed that Moses did this so that the people of Israel wouldn't notice the glory fading. Almost as if, after Moses spoke God's words to the people, he reverted back to being Moses. By covering his face with a veil, perhaps the people would remember the glory of the Lord that shone out as the Law was being given.

Maybe he wanted the moment of transcendence to linger in the congregation's imagination.

Of course, the metaphor of the veil can be used in another way as well. In verse 14 of 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 3, Paul switched the metaphor from Moses to the congregation. Now the veil covers the hearts and minds of the faithful. Now the veil renders the faithful blind to the glory that is before them. Whenever the law of Moses is read, the glory of the Lord is expressed: His grace, mercy, truth, and peace. The veil prevents us from seeing fully with our eyes of faith, the glory that is set before us.

**2.** Some of you may be familiar with the name: Eugene Peterson. Peterson is perhaps best known for his translation of the Bible that is known as *The Message*. In addition to *The Message*, Peterson has written quite a lot about the Christian life and spirituality. What Peterson means by "spirituality" is simply living out of our spiritual identity as children of God in Christ, inhabited and empowered by the Holy Spirit. In other words, "spirituality" is not restricted to what might be called transcendental mountain-top experiences, but is simply living our daily routines by the power of the

Holy Spirit, in connection with Jesus Christ, and moving towards a more intimate and life-giving relationship with our Creator.

One of Eugene Peterson's books is called *Eat this Book*. It explores the art of reading the Bible not solely for knowledge but devotionally and to be changed by what we read. In the section covering contemplation, Peterson quotes Kathleen Norris quoining a phrase: "mystics of the quotidian."

*Quotidian* refers to the ordinary – or even mundane – daily events: cooking meals, getting dressed, reading the news, and arranging appointments.

In its simplest understanding, a *mystic* is a person who lives aware of and connected with God.

All Christians are, by God's grace, mystics.

In Christ we are connected with our Creator by the power of the Spirit.

However, we are often not aware of this connection.

While we might know it, in an academic sense, there is often a veil over our hearts and minds that prevents us from fully experiencing this communion.

And, in consequence, the peace, joy, love, kindness, gentleness, and hope of God often eludes us as we are weighed down by the worries of this age.

Norris' complete quote is as follows:

*I have come to believe that the true **mystics of the quotidian** are not those who contemplate holiness in isolation, reaching godlike illumination in serene silence, but those who manage to find God in a life filled with noise, the demands of other people and relentless daily duties that can consume the self.<sup>2</sup>*

To be a *quotidian mystic* is to remove the veil – or, have the veil removed – and awaken to the glory of the Lord, not when we're on the mountain top, but when we're getting dressed in the morning, dealing with doctors, serving others in Christ's name, reading the news, or washing the dishes.

**3.** When Peter, James, and John saw Jesus transfigured on the mountain and speaking with Moses and Elijah, Peter wanted to built three dwellings, or, more properly, tents (tabernacles): one for Jesus, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.

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<sup>2</sup> Peterson, *Eat this Book*, 111. Quoting Kathleen Norris, *The Quotidian Mysteries*, pp. 1, 70

Maybe he was remembering the Feast of Tabernacles in which the Jewish community would camp out in carefully built but temporary dwellings to remember the tents of their ancestors and celebrate the fact that God dwelt with His people as they travelled through the wilderness; tabernacling/tenting with His people and guiding them with a pillar of cloud during the day and a pillar of fire at night and the Law to shape them into a community.

Peter's well-intentioned suggestion, however, missed the point. Peter wanted to preserve this moment. To build a monument to which they could return and remember the time they saw the Lord's glory, remember the time when the Lord in his full glory lived among them.

But Jesus still had work to do. He had to go to the cross. Moses and Elijah were talking with Jesus about his departure. His Exodus. Just as God had delivered the Israelites so many years before, now God will deliver humankind from sin and death by the Exodus of the Son of sons through the cross of Calvary.

Jesus still had work to do. It was time he "set his face to go to Jerusalem."

And, the disciples still had work to do. At the bottom of the mountain were the crowds waiting to hear a word of God's grace and experience God's healing – experience a tangible expression of God's mercy.

Despite the fact that Peter was the one who rightly identified Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of the Living God; despite the fact that Peter was "fully awake" – at least in the physical sense – when he saw Jesus transfigured, Peter was still awakening to the gospel that the Lord's glory: his grace, mercy, and peace; his justice, righteousness, and compassion; his creating, redeeming, healing, and re-creating ability and desire doesn't fade when they leave the mountaintop.

*And the Word became flesh and **lived among us**, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a Father's only son, **full of grace and truth.**<sup>3</sup>*

By Christ's departure, sin is forgiven and the heavenly Father reaches out to restore our communion with him in which is healing and abundant living.

By the Holy Spirit we are united in Christ with the Father.

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<sup>3</sup> John 1:14

His glory is with us.  
The glory of the Lord is wherever Jesus is.  
Jesus is wherever the Holy Spirit is.  
The Holy Spirit is wherever Christians are.

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*Peter was still awakening to the gospel that the glory of the Lord is near whether we are in worship at God's holy mountain or in the valley rebuking evil spirits and tending to the needs of ourselves, our families, and our neighbours.*

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4. The journey of faith involves awakening to the glory of God-with-us by the Holy Spirit in our quotidian living. (Or, as we explored last week, realizing the meaning of the presence of the kingdom of God – that the Balm is not only over in Gilead, it is here with us now.)

This isn't just an academic pursuit nor something to be reserved for prayer meetings or spiritual retreats. It is essential for being able to navigate life with joy and hope and peace.

I have no idea what Ukrainians are experiencing right now. Nor, for that matter, the general population of Russia, nor the citizens of Europe at large.

But I do know what I'm experiencing.

I do know that when I turned on my computer on Thursday and read the news headlines, and read the rather terrifying quotes about another European war, I panicked.

As if the pandemic wasn't enough to tax our mental and emotional – not to mention physical – health, we now have a European conflict to add to the worries of this age that weigh us down.

But, despite my feelings of anxiety, the gospel is that no matter what, God is with us: Emmanuel! And there is a Resurrection!

The glory of the Lord doesn't fade when we're down in the valleys.

When we can recognize, in the privacy of our hearts and minds, that the Lord is *with us* in the valleys, we can relax!

*Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.<sup>4</sup>*

What is needed then, is for Christians to develop the holy habit of *repentance*.

*...when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed.<sup>5</sup>*

“Repentance” is a word of grace. It is a word of reconciliation, of harmony, and of peace. It’s about turning towards the One who is already seeking you.

Repentance is not just about the moment we become a Christian, the so-called “conversion” moment. Repentance is a daily holy habit of inviting Christ into our quotidian activities, and learning to listen to him, and seeking to become more aware of him in the same.

Next Sunday is the first Sunday in the season of Lent and we’re going to spend the 5 Lenten Sundays prior to Palm Sunday exploring repentance. We’ll look at things like Thanksgiving and Belief; Discernment and Trusting Obedience; and Praise.

For the health of our souls, for the good of our families and neighbourhoods, and for the glory of God, let us each in the privacy of our own hearts and minds, turn to the Lord, recognize his glory present in our quotidian struggles, and rest near to the heart of God.

Amen.

**Hymn:** “Near to the heart of God”  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eXzTMDHvdfg>  
(Songs and Everlasting Joy)

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<sup>4</sup> 2 Corinthians 3:17, 18.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. 16.

## **Prayers of Intercession and Thanksgiving:<sup>6</sup>**

Revealing God,  
You bless us with your presence and wisdom,  
and we marvel at the wonders of your love.  
You created a beautiful world that reveals your majesty.  
You sent your Son to show us how to live with compassion.  
Your Holy Spirit guides us on our way.  
Thank you for opening our eyes to your presence each day.  
Help us to recognize you not only in mountaintop experiences,  
but also in everyday tasks and in times of great challenge.  
Lord, in your mercy,  
**Hear our prayer.**

Loving God,  
Much in this world needs the transformation only you can provide.  
Where there is violence, bring calm;  
where there is poverty, send sustenance;  
where there is confusion, bring wisdom;  
where there is chaos, create order;  
where minds and hearts are troubled, bring comfort;  
where pain is crippling, grant release.  
Move the hearts of the rich to share with those in need;  
and call the powerful to act with justice for those at risk.  
Give us all the will to work for the wellbeing of the earth  
and to live with respect for the fragile balances within your creation.  
Hear us now in this time of silence  
as we raise to you the names and situations on our hearts this day:

*Silence for 30 seconds*

Hear the cries of all who suffer and bring each one hope of new life with you.  
Lord, in your mercy,  
**Hear our prayer.**

Eternal God, we pray for your church around the world  
and for our congregation.  
Give your people the energy to shine  
wherever there is persecution, despair or discouragement.  
Bless each congregation with wisdom and vision,  
as we face the changes in the world caused by the pandemic.  
Renew our imagination and commitment  
to develop new forms of ministry and mission for the days ahead.  
Gather us as a people again after months of distancing,  
and inspire us with greater delight in your mystery,

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<sup>6</sup> From worship resources for February 27, 2022 available at: <https://presbyterian.ca/worship>



and greater joy in seeking your presence.  
Lord, in your mercy,  
**Hear our prayer.**

We ask all these things through Christ Jesus,  
who revealed your will to us through your revolutionary love,  
and taught us to pray these words together:

**Lord's Prayer**

**Benediction**