Mindfulness Meditation
February 14
Transfiguration Sunday

Bell *(a call to mindfulness)*

My thoughts are not your thoughts,
My ways are not your ways.
As high as the heavens are above the earth,
So my ways are beyond your ways,
And my thoughts are beyond your thoughts

Isaiah 55: 8-9

Bell *(a little silence, about 2 minutes)*

This Sunday the church commemorates the Transfiguration of Christ. After ascending a mountain with three of his disciples, Jesus' divinity is revealed to them and he is seen talking with Elijah and Moses. The profundity of this moment in the lives of these disciples overwhelmed them as evidenced by the Apostle Peter's terrified response, "let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

The scripture reading for this morning causes me to think about moments in my life where the presence of God is almost palpable. I would call those moments transcendent. Whatever blocks our awareness of God dissolves and we have a sense of sinking back into the source of everything. It is a moment of personal communion. As Howard Thurman writes, "There was no voice. There was no image. There was no vision. There was God." While these experiences can happen at any time, often they take us by surprise at the most unsuspecting moments.

Diane and I are blessed by a small furry creature, the product of multiple breeds and unusual temperament. Each morning and evening, no matter the weather, she stands looking expectantly at me for her walk. Begrudgingly, I don my winter layers, boots, cap and gloves and trudge out the door hoping for a short around-the-block stroll. Her favorite walk, however, is down into the park and alongside the Christmas Run creek. It is in these moments, when thoughts are silenced and only the sounds of the stream and the wind are heard, that I have been surprised and overwhelmed by a deep and abiding unitive joy that assures me of being loved beyond measure and part of a great and ever evolving cosmos.

Being surprised by God is not limited to nature, the outdoors and time and place. We can be surprised huddled around our computers on zoom, in the middle of the grocery store, at the gas pump, or washing dishes in the kitchen.

Transcendent moments can happen in the midst of a difficult relationship or in community. They cannot be planned for or organized for our purposes such as the Apostle Peter suggested doing by building three dwellings on the top of the mountain. Neither can they be codified in a creed or dogma and placed within a gated community. God's transcendent presence in the midst of our complicated and confusing lives and world around us can only be received in gratitude and humility as cracks of light shining forth God's great and abiding love for us.

As we enter into silence together, focusing on our in-breath and our out-breath, may we become aware of those the moments in our own lives where we have been surprised by God. May we allow our hearts to be filled with gratitude and awe by this great Unknown surrounding, holding and loving us in spite of ourselves.

Bell (*18 minutes of silence)**

1st Bell

2nd Bell

Reflections of the Community: Hearing from One Another

Closing Prayer *(unison)*

Loving God,
As the reality of our times is unveiled before our eyes,
remove temptation for cynicism, denial, fear and despair.
Awaken us to fullness, hope, humility
and greater love for one another.
That placing our hope in what matters and what lasts,
we may abide in the silence of your eternal presence,
filled with your love and healing balm
for this planet and all people.
Amen[1]

**The simplest and most profound portal into silence and mindfulness is the breath. Allow all other mental activity to rest as you become mindful your natural breath. Feel the movement of air as it flows in and out of your body tenderly embracing it and simply allowing it to be what it is. As thoughts arise, allow them to be and return to your breath. In this way, your presence is maintained in the here and now.*

References:

1. Adapted from "Prayer for our Community" by Fr. Richard Rohr, OFM. CAC Morning Meditation, Friday February 5, 2021.