

## Last Epiphany A 2017

**Today we mark one of the rarest things**, at least some think, a genuine theophany, the showing up of God in the world, the uncreated one piercing through the thickness of the creation and being seen, revealed.

It was as though they had been seeing Jesus in black and white; they suddenly realized, and then they saw him in amazing Technicolor, and they realized that this version was the fullness, was what they had been meant to see all along, what they would see in the kingdom; Jesus filled with the light and glory of God. And themselves and everything else transformed by his transformation. And then the vision faded, and the colors dimmed, and they grayed out, and he said, don't tell anyone what you saw... the divine appearance over and regular life calling.

Peter tried to stave off the disappointment, with his plan to build three dwellings and stay there on the mountain.

He desired what we all desire, to know the holiness of God and the holiness of life all the time, every minute. He did not want to fall into cynicism, detachment, and distance from God and others. He wanted that Saturday morning feeling, not that Monday morning feeling.

We might call this the sanctification of everyday life, this desire that we feel the glory and love of God and the wonder of life persistently. It is not easily achieved but those who live in a knowledge of the holiness of life are well along the path toward the Kingdom of Christ.

We might think of the unbridled enthusiasm we see in a toddler like Neil Kuykendall, the evolving reticence that we feel in adolescence, and burdens of adulthood that many feel they labor under. In martial terms, there is a difference between the honeymoon and 20 years of marriage. Our lives are often long and full; responsibility is real. Sometimes we lose track of the holy meaning and sacred possibility of our lives and become cold to God in the process.

But what everyday redemption is offered for those who will seek the holiness, the sanctification of everyday life.

The sink full of dirty dishes is a chance to love and serve the rest of the household.

The gracious things your co-workers do for you is their chance to reflect the love of God and claim the goodness of life.

The wonder of a spring day tells of the presence of the creator.

Even the term on vestry or the many Sundays singing in the choir

speak to the presence and power of God and our capacity to live faithfully in answering God's call.

We retain that sense of wonder the better when we do not take shortcuts to it.  
One of the most difficult experiences I had was in college,  
when I realized that some of my friends got high a lot.  
They and I knew that was not for me, and there were times our friendship suffered.  
I asked people why they were did it and heard about the altered and deeper awareness they felt  
they gained in the process.  
The world seemed wonderfully enchanted.  
Alcohol seems to offer a similar short cut to feelings of connection and joy.  
Even the cycles of our privileged lives,  
from vacation to vacation,  
from holiday to holiday,  
from new purchase to the next awesome consumer experience,  
all of these offer shortcuts, all too temporary,  
to a human substitute for the actual holiness that we can discern in God's beloved creation  
and in our lives and relationships.  
We know how the overuse of any of these shortcuts can deaden us to divine possibility.

Peter wanted that persistent awareness of the holiness of life and of the fullness of God's work in  
Jesus.

But Jesus had more to show him and led him down from this experience and on the hard road to  
Jerusalem and even to the Cross.

We will discover the holiness of God in our everyday lives not after a few drinks,  
not on vacation,  
and not even chiefly in the moments of worship that reach transcendence here in church,  
but when we live with grace and discipline as Jesus' people in our everyday lives,  
when Wednesday at 2:00 PM is more like 11 o'clock on Sunday,  
when the people with whom we live are readily seen as bearers of the image of God.

If we have forgotten that the knowledge of self and God is reached by a hard road,  
Lent arrives this week to remind us.

Long have the saints reported that their joy in the Lord  
and their joy in others  
has increased by prayer, fasting, and self-discipline.  
Strangely, the fullness of God is found when we empty ourselves,  
quiet our minds,  
and open our hearts.

Then we can sense the redeeming and sanctification of our everyday lives, and we, like Christ, on  
the mountain, and like Peter, in the promised days of the Resurrection  
are transformed.