

## Guided meditation: Shining like the sun

“In Louisville, at the corner of Fourth and Walnut, in the center of the shopping district, I was suddenly overwhelmed with the realization that I loved all these people, that they were mine and I theirs, that we could not be alien to one another even though we were total strangers... I have the immense joy of being [human], a member of a race in which God [Godself] became incarnate. As if the sorrows and stupidities of the human condition could overwhelm me, now that I realize what we all are. And if only everybody could realize this! But it cannot be explained. There is no way of telling people that they are all walking around shining like the sun.”

Thomas Merton, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*

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### Meditation

Settle into a comfortable position and close your eyes.

Now become aware of your breathing. Become aware of the air as you breathe it in . . . and breathe it out . . .

Do not control your breathing. Do not try to deepen it or change its rhythm. Simply observe your breathing, in and out, in and out . . .

### Yourself shining like the sun

Now as you breathe, visualize yourself, or if you find it more helpful say your name silently internally gently. Contemplate a time when you felt close to God or felt happy. How does your heart feel? Perhaps you feel a sensation of warmth, openness, and tenderness . . .

As you breathe out, imagine that there is a golden light emanating from your heart. At the same time, silently recite the phrases to yourself.

May you know that you are God's beloved and infinitely precious . . .

May you know that you are shining like the sun . . .

With each exhalation, feel the light emanating within you, with the strong heartfelt wish that you abide in God. Again, notice how this feels in your heart . . .

### A Loved One shining like the sun

Now picture or name someone who is close to you. Notice any sensations around your heart of warmth, openness, and tenderness . . .

Imagine your loved one nearby, and that they too are shining like the sun. As you breathe out, imagine that you are reaching out to them. At the same time, silently recite the phrases.

May you know that you are God's beloved and infinitely precious . . .  
May you know that you are shining like the sun . . .

As you silently repeat these phrases, extend the light emanating from within you to your loved one, with the strong heartfelt wish that they abide in God. Notice how this feels in your heart . . .

### **A Neutral Person shining like the sun**

Now picture or name someone you neither like nor dislike – someone you may see in your everyday life, such as a bus driver, or a stranger you pass on the street. Notice the sensations around your heart – can you also feel warmth, openness, and tenderness towards this person? . . .

Imagine them going about their business nearby, and that they too are shining like the sun. As you breathe out, imagine that you are reaching out to them. At the same time, silently recite the phrases.

May you know that you are God's beloved and infinitely precious . . .  
May you know that you are shining like the sun . . .

As you silently repeat these phrases, extend the light emanating from within you to the person, with the strong heartfelt wish that they too abide in God. Notice how this feels in your heart. Did the sensations change? . . .

### **An Enemy shining like the sun**

Now picture or name someone with whom you have difficulty in your life – a colleague with whom you do not get along, or someone with whom you have recently argued. Notice the sensations around your heart . . .

Imagine them going about their business near to you, and that they too are shining like the sun. As you breathe out, imagine that you are reaching out to them. At the same time, silently recite the phrases.

May you know that you are God's beloved and infinitely precious . . .  
May you know that you are shining like the sun . . .

As you silently repeat these phrases, extend the light emanating from within you to the person, with the strong heartfelt wish that they abide in God. Again, notice how this feels in your heart and how if at all the sensations change. Can you feel warmth, openness, and tenderness towards this person? . . .

Now return to an awareness of your breathing and your own abiding in God . . . and gradually to an awareness of your posture and the room around you . . .  
When you are ready, open your eyes.

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## Notes

This is the first of a series of meditations responding to *Befriending Silence* by Carl McColman, one of the books which the Slow Book Group at Exeter Cathedral has been reading. The book comprises an Introduction, eleven chapters, and a brief Final Word, which we are dividing into six sessions for reflection over the six months April, May, June, July, September and October 2024. In April we are covering the Introduction and Chapter 1: "Charism: A Gift from God".

The breathing exercise is adapted from [\*Sadhana: A Way to God, Christian Exercises in Eastern Form\*](#) (pdf) by Anthony de Mello. The meditation is adapted from the [Compassion Meditation practice](#) from the Greater Good Science Center at the University of California, Berkeley.

Some people imagine in pictures and some are present to others in another way particular to them. If you would find it more helpful than picturing each person in your mind's eye, simply name the person in silence.

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