

The Evelyn Underhill Association Newsletter

2017-2018

www.evelynunderhill.org

Quiet Day 2018

Evelyn Underhill and the “Mysticism of Ordinary Life”

Saturday, June 16, 2018, 9:30-3:30

Nourse Hall, St. Albans Parish*
Next door to the Washington National Cathedral
3001 Wisconsin Ave NW
Washington DC 20016

**Please note change of venue*
Please bring a sack lunch

Registration opens: May 1, 2018

[Download Registration Form](#)

Evelyn Underhill has long been recognized as a pioneer in the retreat movement in the Church of England, and as a highly regarded spiritual director and writer. The author of more than twenty-five books, she was the English language’s most widely read writer on prayer, contemplation, spirituality, worship and mysticism in the first half of the 20th century.

That is the outward, public face of her life and work.

What we will be exploring in this quiet day is the more private aspect of her faith journey—the remarkable way her own spiritual growth, lived out in the context of her “ordinary life,” followed the pattern of the mystic’s development outlined in her most famous scholarly work *Mysticism: the soul’s movement from restless surface to quiet depth, to re-emerge in heroic “divine fecundity.”*

We will also compare the shape of this inner journey with the 11th c. Camaldolese Benedictine wisdom of the



Deborah Smith Douglas

“three-fold good” of the monastic life (experienced as monk in community, hermit in solitude, missionary in the world) and ponder how our own God-ward paths might be seen in that light.

I. Advancing Retreats: Rethinking Evelyn Underhill’s Engagement in the Retreat Movement (and its effect on her)

II. Evelyn Underhill and the Camaldolese charism of Triplex Bonum, the Three-fold Good

Deborah Smith Douglas is a spiritual director, writer, Camaldolese Benedictine oblate and member of the Episcopal church, who has taught classes and led retreats across the United States and Britain (including at Pleshey, the retreat house at Chelmsford in rural Essex that meant so much to Evelyn Underhill). Her essays and poems have been published in *Weavings*, *Commonweal*, *Spiritual Life*, *Desert Call*, *The American Benedictine Review*, *The Christian Century*, and other periodicals. She is the author of *The Praying Life: Seeking God in All Things* (Morehouse 2003) and (with her husband David Douglas) the co-author of *Pilgrims in the Kingdom: Travels in Christian Britain* (Upper Room 2004).

“We know a thing only by uniting with it; by assimilating it; by an interpenetration of it and ourselves. It gives itself to us, just in so far as we give ourselves to it; and it is because our outflow toward things is usually so perfunctory and so languid, that our comprehension of things is so perfunctory and languid too... Wisdom is the fruit of communion; ignorance is the inevitable portion of those who ‘keep themselves to themselves,’ and stand apart, judging, analyzing the things which they have never truly known.”

~ Practical Mysticism

In This Newsletter

Evelyn Underhill's Prayer Book

Robyn Wrigley-Carr

4

Is it Possible to be a "Do It Yourself" Christian Mystic?

Carl McColman

6

Life as Prayer: The Development of Evelyn Underhill's Spirituality

Todd Johnson

9

The 2017 Underhill Quiet Day

15

Retreat and Lecture Offerings on Evelyn Underhill

15

YouTube Resources on Evelyn Underhill

16

New and Noteworthy Scholarship on Evelyn Underhill

16

Evelyn Underhill's Prayer Book

Robyn Wrigley-Carr



In January, 2018, Evelyn Underhill's Prayer Book will be published by SPCK, London. I wanted here to give you a tiny glimpse of how the Prayer Books were found, plus a taste of some of Evelyn's prayers.

Last year, while on a research trip examining 'echoes of von Hügel in Evelyn Underhill', I visited The Retreat House at Pleshey (near Chelmsford, UK). While looking through some papers and books there, I stumbled upon Evelyn Underhill's Prayer Book. It had been found at an Oxfam Bookshop many decades before by a Canadian priest who had posted it to Pleshey. Several Underhill scholars had assumed it had been lost decades before. As I read through the Prayer Book, I had the words of Grace Adophsen Brame echoing in my heart and mind:

...that little book of prayers which Underhill had made herself, one single copy of hand written prayers which she loved... If that is ever found, it will be a treasure.¹

Recognising the 'treasure' I held in my hands, I copied out the Prayer Book. On a subsequent trip to check my copy with the original, a second Prayer Book of Evelyn's also mysteriously emerged. And both copies being uncovered in the 75th anniversary of her death! This Prayer Book was the earlier of the two, so I quickly copied that one as well.

In the Prayer Books Evelyn presents her favourite prayers from writers in Christian spirituality from the 3rd to twentieth century. In the second half of the latter Prayer Book, we read many of Evelyn's own prayers, and I'd love to give you a taste of some of them.

At times, Evelyn's prayers are deeply passionate, heartfelt prayers. For example,

'Let our lives run to Your embrace... and breathe the breath of Eternity. O God Supreme!
Most secret and most present, most beautiful and strong. Constant yet Incomprehensible,
changeless yet changing all! What can I say, my God, my Life, my Holy Joy... You are the only
reality...'

¹ Grace Adophsen Brame, *The Ways of the Spirit* (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 39.

At times, Evelyn's prayers are poetic:

'...beyond us are the hills of God, the snowfields of the Spirit, the Other Kingdom.'

Evelyn's energy and zest shine forth in her prayers:

'...make us ready for adventure.'

'Guide us with your adorable wisdom.'

'take possession of our souls. So fill... our imaginations with pictures of Your love...'

Evelyn's dependent, humble posture is clearly evident:

'Let us ask God to work in us those changes that He knows we need.'

'Let us ask for closer communion with our Lord-: therefore a greater forgetting of ourselves.'

Evelyn prays about union with Christ, even at times in unique ways:

'Within Your wounds, hide me!'

And Evelyn, the retreat leader, tries to lead the community in prayers that will comfort and restore:

'Soothe our restlessness: say to our hearts "Peace be still." Brood over us, within us, Spirit of perfect peace... enfolded in Your loving care.'

It's extremely exciting to see the prayers Evelyn carefully chose and wrote for leading spiritual retreats available to a new generation of pray-ers and retreat leaders. Please spread the word about this publication. All royalties are being donated to The House of Retreat, Pleshey, where Evelyn led retreats in the 1920s and 1930s.

Dr. Robyn Wrigley-Carr is Senior Lecture in Theology and Spirituality at Alphacrusis College, Sydney, Australia. Her PhD research at the University of St. Andrews, Scotland, examined Baron Friedrich von Hügel as a spiritual director.

Is it possible to be a “Do It Yourself” Christian Mystic? Evelyn Underhill would say “No” — and I agree with her.



Carl McColman

Nearly all Christian mystics maintain that an essential characteristic of Christian mysticism is participation in the Body of Christ, which is to say, in the Christian community of faith. In other words, to be a Christian mystic, it is as important to be a follower of Christ as it is to be a mystic. And to be a follower of Christ means to express spirituality in a communal way. The above statements annoy a lot of people. Sorry about that, but that’s how it rolls.

Community. If it’s good enough for Jesus, it’s good enough for us. Recently a reader of this blog forwarded me an email from a friend of his who criticizes some of Evelyn Underhill’s ideas in her book *Mysticism: A Study in the Nature and Development of Spiritual Consciousness*. These two people, whom I’ll call “the reader” and “the friend,” were looking at a passage in *Mysticism* where Underhill describes two core mystical principles. I’ll post the complete email at the end of this post, but for now, here’s just the highlights.

Here are Underhill’s two principles, from *Mysticism*:

1. While mysticism is an essential element in full human religion, it can never be the whole content of such religion. It requires to be embodied in some degree in history, dogma and institutions if it is to reach the sense-conditioned human mind.
2. The antithesis between the religions of “authority” and of “spirit,” the “Church” and the “mystic,” is false. Each requires the other. (pages ix-x)

Underhill goes on to say:

The “exclusive” mystic, who condemns all outward forms and rejects the support of the religious complex, is an abnormality. He inevitably tends towards pantheism, and seldom exhibits in its richness the Unitive Life. It is the “inclusive” mystic, whose freedom and originality are fed but not hampered by the spiritual tradition within which he appears, who accepts the incarnational status of the human spirit, and can “find the inward in the outward as well as the inward in the inward,” who shows us in their fullness and beauty the life-giving possibilities of the soul transfigured in God.

What Evelyn Underhill is doing here is very simple: she is drawing a distinction between mysticism in a generic sense, and mysticism as specifically manifested within Christianity. And Christian mysticism, at least, is a

spirituality where mystics are “fed, but not hampered” by the community and tradition from which they emerge.

Put more simply: Christian mystics are formed by the Christian tradition and the Christian Church; therefore, to be a Christian mystic requires being positively and creatively engaged with Christian community.

As I have said, this annoys some people. Why? Because we live in an individualistic culture, which affects the way we think about spirituality.

My reader’s friend appears to be one of the annoyed. He accuses Underhill of “historical fettering” (that’s vague but I assume he means enslaved to the past), overly “rooted in history, dogma and institution,” and simply “very wrong.”

In a way, we Christians have only ourselves to blame for this kind of anti-communal thinking. After all, some Christians can be aggressive in trying to evangelize (convert) others. Such aggressive proselytizing always seems to come from a place that says “we have the truth, and you outsiders are simply wrong.” No wonder people outside the Church have begun to mirror this perspective back, and just dismiss the Church (and its advocates) as simply “very wrong”!

Because so much Christian rhetoric has, historically speaking, been so hostile to those outside the church, it has now become almost a “secular dogma” for non-churchgoers to see religious community as inherently flawed, limited, constraining, “fettering,” and — most damning of all — anti-mystical.

I am a blessed man. I have had the privilege to be mentored by so many creative, visionary, joyful, nondualist, interspiritual (or interspiritual-friendly) Christian contemplatives, that I know in my bones how engagement in faith community — even a community as toxic and dysfunctional as many churches are — actually enhances, rather than constrains, the authentic Christian mystic.

Back to my reader, his friend, and the quote from Evelyn Underhill. Needless to say, I agree with Underhill, although I might use more gentle language to make my point. I think accusing her of “historical fettering” or being overly “rooted in dogma” sheds no light on the strength (or weakness) of Underhill’s ideas; it is simply a reflection of the individualism that is pervasive in our society.

Now, the friend goes on to refer to a former Catholic priest who, a half a century ago, wrote a book called *A Question of Conscience* in which he describes his crisis of faith which led to leaving the church. In the words of my reader’s friend, this book “shows how a faith became a system. He also describes powerfully the effects of that system on the hope and joy of the Christian. It can be inimical to spiritual growth and often is.”

Now, I haven’t read *A Question of Conscience* so I can’t really comment on it, but I know well enough how many

people do get hurt by religions (not just Catholicism). But the problem here is not that all religious groups thwart mystical spirituality, but that religious groups which have lost their mystical heart do precisely that.

When Catholicism or other forms of Christianity are hostile to mysticism, the solution is not to reject community, but to reform it. The solution to anti-mystical religion is not rejecting religion, but embracing truly mystical religion — religion grounded in contemplative practice, in silence, and in a joyful engagement with the God who is radical love.

But let me make a few final comments as to why I think Christian mysticism is, at its heart, communal mysticism.

- I think it's important to remember that Christian mysticism is a unique expression of mysticism, as authentic and as deep as any other "flavor" of mystical spirituality, but also marked by its uniquely Christian character. Engagement with community is integral to Christian mysticism. Other forms of mysticism, maybe not so much.
- Obviously, I am a student and a writer concerned with Christian mysticism, so my work will explore mysticism with a Christian "view" in mind. But it's disingenuous to dismiss the Christian view as limited or wrong just because it is anchored in tradition and community. That's like saying a zebra is an inferior mammal because it's not a horse.
- Furthermore, other forms of mysticism — whether Buddhist, Vedantist, Advaitic, Sufi, or SBNR — all have their own unique view. Is that historical fettering? Not hardly. It is, to echo Underhill, how these mysticisms are "embodied" so that they may speak to the "sense-conditioned mind."
- If someone does not like the character of Christianity (and Christian mysticism is simply a contemplative expression of Christianity in toto), then do not be a Christian. But please do not criticize those of us who are Christians. Even my reader's friend admitted that he recognized "the good hearts, kindness, spiritual wonderfulness of so many Catholics." But apparently he couldn't connect the dots and see that the institution he clearly disliked has been instrumental in fostering those good and kind and wonderful hearts.

In this blog post's headline I ask the question "Is it possible to be a 'Do-it-Yourself' Christian mystic?" The key word here is Christian. If it's really important to you to explore the interior worlds of silence and contemplation without being "fettered" by "history, dogma and institution," go for it. I personally don't think you're going to go very deep, but that's my opinion, and you're free to disagree. Just don't call yourself a Christian mystic — or, for that matter, a Buddhist mystic or a Vedantist mystic or a Sufi mystic. Because all of those kinds of mystics ground their spirituality in history, community, and established teaching, just like the Christians mystics do.

Used with author's permission. First appeared in www.Patheos.com/blogs/carlmccolman/2017/04/

Life as Prayer: The Development of Evelyn Underhill's Spirituality

Todd Johnson



Although Evelyn Underhill (1875–1941) was baptized and confirmed in the Church of England, the Underhill family could be considered Christians in only the most social of terms. Underhill had little formal religious education and no theological training.¹ In fact, Underhill's first commitment to any sort of religious group was a hermetic sect known as the "Golden Dawn," a most inauspicious beginning for one who would later be called "the spiritual director for her generation."²

Underhill's spiritual journey is a fascinating one, and one which has been well chronicled.³ Her career began with her classic work *Mysticism* (1911)⁴ and can be said to have concluded with her other classic *Worship* (1936).⁵ These studies are similar in that they were comprehensive in their scope and pioneering in their approach, and both volumes are standard works in the fields of mysticism and liturgy. The fact that both remain in print is a testimony to their enduring quality. These works are very different in their theological approach however, as *Mysticism* is rooted in a hybrid of psychology, Neo-Platonism, and evolutionary thought, while *Worship* is grounded in a Trinitarian theology centered on the Holy Spirit and a theology of sacrifice.

Between these two books Underhill accomplished numerous "firsts": she was the first woman to lecture at an Oxford college in theology, the first woman to lecture Anglican clergy, and one of the first women to be included in Church of England commissions. These accomplishments, along with her work as a theological editor and her role as a spiritual director and retreat leader, made Evelyn Underhill a prominent figure in her day.

A Dynamic Faith

One of the little understood facts of Underhill's life and career are the changes of mind she went through over time. Underhill's thought went through three distinct phases. Her earliest theological approach could be defined by a strong emphasis on evolutionary thought, psychology, and Platonic dualism. This period lasted from 1891–1919, and was dominated by writings on mysticism and mystical theology. Her rather optimistic theology was unable to explain the cruel realities of World War I. So, in 1920, she began receiving spiritual direction from Baron Friedrich von Hügel, one of the most respected theologians in Europe at that time. This began a decade-long theme of more Christocentric thought and a growing balance between God's immanence and transcendence, which lasted from 1920–1929. The last years of her life (1930–1941) were marked by yet another paradigm shift, where under the influence of Russian Orthodox immigrants to England, Underhill's theology took a firm shift to the third person of the Trinity. Her development of a pneumatology happened coincidentally with her growing social conscience as expressed by her pacifism at the onset of World War II.⁶

Scholar of the Spirit

In terms of Underhill's understanding of spirituality, it is notable that over time Underhill shifts from the term "mysticism" that so dominated her early years as an author, to terms such as "life of the Spirit," "the spiritual life," and "spirituality." Only twice in the late 1920s does Underhill write on mysticism, and from 1930 on her writings are almost exclusively on spirituality and worship. It would be interesting to see if Underhill's use of the term spirituality was reflective of the use of that term by others, either past or present, or if (as I am inclined to believe), her use of the term, in fact, popularized the term spirituality for the second half of the century.

Underhill's writings on what we would now call "spirituality" are bracketed by two works, *Mysticism* (1911) and *The Spiritual Life* (1937).⁷ The first, *Mysticism*, can be understood well by reflecting on its subtitle, *A Study of the Nature and Development of Man's Spiritual Consciousness*. This book described the human potential of ascent to the divine. Underhill uses the classic threefold paradigm of mystical union of purgation, illumination, and unification, but expands it, adding two more stages. The result was her five-step process of conversion, purgation, illumination, surrender, and union. Underhill added a step at the beginning—conversion, or a threshold of awareness of the ultimate reality (God) existing outside oneself. She also added a fourth step, surrender, which she drew from many mystical writings, but St. John of the Cross in particular. This stage was the "dark night of the soul," that period of dryness that tests one's ultimate commitment to the spiritual journey. Underhill's massive study, though heavily weighted towards medieval Christian mysticism, was intentionally interreligious. Her goal was to demonstrate the universal human capacity for mystical ascent to "reality," that is, the more real supernatural world that is the goal of human existence. Though some saints and mystics might attain such a state of union with God in this world, most must wait for the life in the world beyond this world. Regardless, the journey was an inward and private one, what Plotinus described as the "flight of the alone to the One."

EVELYN UNDERHILL

Underhill was a poet, novelist, spiritual author, and theologian—as well as being a sailor, bookbinder, and artist. Drawn simultaneously to psychology and mysticism, she was one of the preeminent spiritual voices of the twentieth century, in spite of the religious indifference of her parents and husband. Though she wrestled with her own doubts and limitations, she became the definitive model for retreat leaders and spiritual directors for her generation and those to follow.

The small volume *The Spiritual Life* was very different. This little book was a compilation of four radio broadcasts Underhill delivered on the BBC. Gone were the concepts of mystical union and human ascent. In their place was a threefold pattern of the spiritual life: adoration, adherence and cooperation. This pattern was derived from the French school of spirituality identified with Pierre de Berulle and Jean-Jacques Olier. This was an approach to the spiritual life that began with God's initiative and resulted in a life conformed to the cruciform posture of our Lord. It also involved community and service to others. Gone was the philosophy and psychology of *Mysticism*; in its place was the Christian life of worship, prayer, and ministry.

In her review of this book in *Theology*, Aelfrida Tillyard wrote this description of Underhill's broadcasts, some of her last public presentations:

When Evelyn Underhill sat at the accordance, and sent her voice across space to thousands of unseen listeners, her heart must have been full of true apostolic zeal and the love of souls. She was not there to display her knowledge of German metaphysics, or the extent of her acquaintance great and small. She was not there to impress anyone with her grasp of psychological theories involved in spiritual exercises and systems of meditation. She was there to bring human beings in touch with their Creator, and, please God, she would do it, if she could.⁸

At the end of her life, Underhill was passionately proclaiming a corrected understanding of prayer from her more famous mystical writings.

Prayer and Intercession Rethought

This essay is not intended to be an exercise in either the history of spirituality or in spiritual autobiography. Instead, I hope to focus on a unique aspect of Underhill's understanding of prayer and through it her changing understanding of the life of the Spirit. To do this I will focus on two essays written by Underhill in the late 1920s which indicate the time of a shift in Underhill's thought and will highlight the importance of her newfound understanding of prayer.

The first essay was actually a pamphlet published for the YWCA in England in 1926, simply entitled "Prayer."⁹ Although this work still has overtones of Underhill's early mystical writings, such as an emphasis on God's immanence, human effort in prayer, and the solitary nature of prayer, yet there was a different feel to it than writings a decade earlier. This was more Christ-centered and less esoteric.

Underhill began by describing prayer as a broad genre rather than a single item, prayer is not "simply' this or that, [that would] spoil our understanding of [prayer's] richness and variety." Still Underhill does define the life of prayer as "our whole life towards heaven," and no matter what type of prayer you pray, it is communion with God. Underhill continues to stress the work of prayer here though, asserting that "real prayer is a great and difficult art."¹⁰

Underhill offers the idea of a healthy body as metaphor for a healthy spiritual life. A healthy body must have food, fresh air, and exercise to thrive. So it is in the spiritual life: one must have food, that is, a steady diet of Scripture reading and spiritual classics; fresh air, that is, to live with an attitude of praise and gratitude; and, finally, exercise—which requires a disciplined routine, and not simply reading, praising, and praying when one feels like it. Quoting St. Francis de Sales, "We seldom do well what we only do seldom."¹¹ Fulfilling these three regimens is not the spiritual life, but how one prepares for it, for the spiritual life is adoration and adherence. Adoration is the attitude which places God, and not one's self, in the center of one's life. Adherence is being passionately devoted to your

relationship with God to the point where it takes precedence over all other things. It is, ultimately, to live every moment with the recognition that you are in the intimate presence of God.

Though this is a significant move in Underhill's thought, it still ends primarily in the spiritual life being an autonomous relationship (though guided by people of faith past and present) with God. There is little social support, intimacy, or relevance for prayer beyond one's own spiritual self-improvement. This is not quite where Underhill lands at the end of her life, however. Baron von Hügel identified Underhill's tendency towards inwardness when she was under his spiritual direction a few years earlier. His treatment was for Underhill to spend time caring for the poor. Those seeds, planted by von Hügel, appear to have sprouted shortly after writing this tract, as evidenced in her next essay.

In 1928 Underhill was invited to address the United Free Church in Scotland with the topic of prayer. Her address was not published until five years after her death in her *Collected Papers*.¹² This address is the first indication that Underhill's theology of prayer had taken on a decidedly different tone. The first mark of distinction is the way that Underhill began her address when defining prayer:

What, then, is Prayer? In a most general sense, it is the intercourse of our little human souls with God. Therefore it includes all the work done by God Himself through, in, and with souls which are self-given to Him in prayer. Prayer, then, is a purely spiritual activity; and its real doer is God Himself, the one inciter and mover of our souls.¹³

Although there is still an emphasis on God's immanence, it is tempered. More striking in this essay, as the quote above demonstrates, is a tempering of human will and action with God's initiative and provision. In a word, prayer begins with grace and not works.

Of the threefold pattern of the French school of adoration, adherence, and cooperation, Underhill had introduced the first two elements in her essay of 1926. This last essay would be the one in which she completes the triad by introducing cooperation, although she does not use the term cooperation per se. The entire essay is about prayer as the process of releasing yourself to do the will of God in the world. This, according to Underhill, is the life of prayer.

Underhill stresses in this essay a new idea that will become a common theme for the rest of her life: sacrifice. Prayer requires "self-given" souls in a spirit of sacrifice and oblation. The love of God, which inspires us to prayer in the first place, is the love of our crucified Lord—self-sacrificial love. Underhill continues, "Self-offering, loving, unconditional and courageous, is therefore the first requirement of true intercessory prayer."¹⁴ Such an intercession operates on the supernatural plane, where the human spirit invokes God's Spirit to act. But it also works on the human plane, where the intercessor enacts one's prayer in deeds of kindness, compassion, justice, and mercy.

Offerings without Condition

In what I consider to be some of Underhill's most revealing and poignant prose, she wrote:

“A real man or woman of prayer, then, should be a live wire, a link between God's grace and the world that needs it. In so far as you have given your lives to God, you have offered yourselves, without conditions, as transmitters of His saving and enabling love: and the will and love, the emotional drive, which you thus consecrate to God's purposes, can actually do work on supernatural levels for those for whom you are called upon to pray.”¹⁵

Prayer, from this point on in Underhill's writings, had a decidedly social and, in the above sense, intercessory cast to it—as did Underhill's life. She became much more conscious of the effects of sin in the larger world, not simply the individual life. The foremost example of this was her public advocacy of pacifism at the advent of World War II, a decidedly unpopular position that cost her reputation dearly. Still Underhill was unswerving. Her life of prayer had lead her to believe that no Christian should kill another Christian for the sake of any nation, and if all who were baptized should refuse to fight, there would be no war.

Few people have studied prayer in theory and practice—Christian or non-Christian—to the extent the Evelyn Underhill had. At the end of her life, after having considered many options, she concluded that prayer was about availing oneself to the purposes of God, not invoking the activity of God for either spiritual assurance or earthly benefit, but for conformity to the life and ministry of the one through whom we pray: Jesus Christ, the crucified. On the shelves of spiritual books of our day, this understanding is not a big seller. Underhill's early writings are most frequently reprinted, with later writings difficult to find. Yet in the world today, what sort of people of prayer would God ask us to be? Ones who strive for spiritual development alone, or ones who offer their lives as living intercessions, empowered by the Spirit, sent by Christ, to do God's will? Might the latter define all of our lives of prayer.

Todd E. Johnson is lead professor in the PhD concentration in Christian Worship and was recently named the Theological Director of the Brehm Center.

Reprinted with permission from Fuller Studio.

ENDNOTES

1. Dana Greene, *Evelyn Underhill: Artist of the Infinite Life* (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 11–12.
2. See Jonathan Bodgener, “Evelyn Underhill: Spiritual Director to Her Generation,” *London Quarterly and Holborn Review* 183 (1958): 46–50.

3. Three biographies on Underhill have been published, and one incomplete manuscript remains unpublished. These are Dana Greene, *Evelyn Underhill: Artist of the Infinite Life*; Christopher Armstrong, *Evelyn Underhill: An Introduction to Her Life and Writings* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975); Margaret Cropper, *Evelyn Underhill* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1958); and Lucy Menzies, "Biography of Evelyn Underhill," TMs unfinished, Underhill Collection Archives: St. Andrews University Library, St. Andrews, Scotland. By far the most accessible and more important of these works is Greene's study.
4. Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism: A Study of the Nature and Development of Man's Spiritual Consciousness*, 1st ed. (London: Methuen, 1911).
5. Evelyn Underhill, *Worship*, Library of Constructive Theology, 1st ed. (London: Nisbet, 1936).
6. For a more detailed survey of the development of Underhill's thought, see Todd E. Johnson, "Anglican Writers at Century's End: An Evelyn Underhill Primer," *Anglican Theological Review* 80 (1998): 402–13.
7. Evelyn Underhill, *The Spiritual Life: Four Broadcast Talks* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1937).
8. Aelfrida Tillyard, review of Evelyn Underhill, *The Spiritual Life*, in *Theology* 34 (1937): 379.
9. Evelyn Underhill, "Prayer," in *Evelyn Underhill: Modern Guide to the Ancient Quest for the Holy*, ed. Dana Greene (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), 135–44.
10. *Ibid.*, 135–36.
11. *Ibid.*, 139.
12. Evelyn Underhill, "Life as Prayer," in *Collected Papers of Evelyn Underhill*, ed. Lucy Menzies (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1946), 61–72.
13. *Ibid.*, 61–62.
14. *Ibid.*, 68.
15. *Ibid.*, 62.

The 2017 Underhill Quiet Day

On June 17, 2017 the annual Evelyn Underhill Day of Quiet was held on the grounds of the Washington National Cathedral. The presenter, Bishop Frank Griswold, 25th Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, offered meditations on “The ‘Homely’ Ways of the Spirit.” By ‘Homely’ Underhill meant the ordinary, the quotidian ways in which the Spirit works in one’s life. In the first meditation Bishop Griswold chronicled Underhill’s understanding of prayer as the work of the Holy Spirit in us, which begins with the Spirit yearning to be with us. Prayer transforms us and ‘ones’ us to God. Our work is to be open to the moment, to listen attentively, to accept that we are molded through all created things, and that the circumstances of our lives will show us the way. In a second meditation he asked participants to recognize that when the Spirit dwells within us, our lives become a prayer and we pray unceasingly. Christ rushed toward us with rescuing love. What we aim for is not “perfection” but completeness, wholeness.

Retreat and Lecture Offerings on Evelyn Underhill



December 1-3, 2017, Lost River Retreat Center

Led by former Ravensworth Baptist Church (RBC) member Myra Binns Bridgforth
Evelyn Underhill (1875-1941) was an English Anglo-Catholic, a poet, novelist, spiritual director, and theologian- LRRC Main Lodgeas well as being a sailor, bookbinder, and artist. Drawn simultaneously to psychology and mysticism, she was one of the preeminent spiritual voices of the twentieth century known for her numerous works on religion and spiritual practice, in particular Christian mysticism. Contact myralpc@me.com.

The Silent Retreat Community invites RBC congregants to join as we immerse ourselves in the bold experience of the mystical and practical wisdom of Evelyn Underhill. At the retreat, we will quite intentionally begin the journey through Advent to Christmas.

The Retreat House at Pleshey, established 108 years ago, and Evelyn Underhill’s favorite place for retreat, will offer three Evelyn Underhill events in June 2018:

Evelyn Underhill Talk

Thursday, 14th June, 2018 @ 7:00 pm - 9:30 pm

The role Evelyn Underhill played as a Retreat Leader. Val Thompson is a retired teacher and works as a Spiritual Director in the Chelmsford Diocese and is currently studying for an M.A. in Christian Spirituality at Sarum College

Evelyn Underhill Quiet Day

Friday, 15th June, 2018 @ 9:30 am - 4:00 pm

A weekend, starting with a Quiet Day, reflecting on the life and work of Evelyn Underhill as a help to Christian living today. Revd Barry Orford, following many years of working with students in Oxford, is now the Guild Vicar of St Dunstan-in-the-West in Fleet Street.

A Retreat with Evelyn Underhill

Friday, 15th June, 2018 @ 6:00 pm

Continuing the Evelyn Underhill weekend led by Revd Barry Orford.

Contact: www.retreathousepleshey.com

Professor Ron Dart will speak on “Evelyn Underhill and C. S. Lewis: Literary and Contemplative Affinities” at Trinity Western University, British Columbia, on October 18, 2017 and on “Evelyn Underhill: A Contemplative for All Seasons” at Stillpoint, Becksie Retreat Centre, Bellingham, WA, November 11, 2017.

YouTube Resources on Evelyn Underhill

There are several you tube talks on Evelyn Underhill:

- Evelyn Underhill: Introductory Talk by Ann Loades
- Shalem Interview with Dana Greene about Evelyn Underhill
- Carl McColman: The Book That Changed My Life
- Evelyn Underhill: The Making of a Myth by Liz Watson
- In the Footsteps of Mary Magdalene: A Spirituality of Evelyn Underhill by Coleen M. Griffith

New and Noteworthy Scholarship on Evelyn Underhill

“Directing Modernist Spirituality: Evelyn Underhill, The Subliminal Consciousness and Spiritual Direction.” By Jamie Callison in *Modernist Women Writers and Spirituality: A Piercing Darkness*, ed. Andrew Radford et al. London: Palgrave Macmillian, 2016, 39-54.

“Evelyn Underhill: Mysticism and Worship,” by Ann Loades in *The International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 10:1 (2010, 57-70.)

“Mysticism: ‘The Energetic Love’ of a Female Adventurer,” by Ann Loades in *Exploring Lost Dimensions in Christian Mysticism: Opening to the Mystical*. Ed. Louise Nelstrop and Simon D. Podmore. Burlington: Ashgate, 2013, 117-129.

“Beyond the Fringe of Speech: The Spirituality of Evelyn Underhill and Art,” by Marie Therese Crowley. Ph.D. dissertation, Australian Catholic University, 2008.

“Evelyn Underhill on Spiritual Transformation: A Trinitarian Structure?” by Tom Ryan in *Australian eJournal of Theology*, 9 (2007), 10-13.

“The Question of God: Evelyn Underhill’s Response” www.pbs.org/wgbh/questionofGod/voices/underhill.

The Mystical Theology Network - This network aims to facilitate fresh theological engagement with Christian mystical traditions, broadly understood as the receptions and interpretations of those texts and figures that have been treated as ‘canonical.’ The network supports both academic and experimental explorations through conferences and publications. Users.ox.ac.uk/~rege0676.

Andrew Wainwright presented “Dreaming a New Earth: Reflections on Australian Aboriginal Spirituality” at the Yarra Theological Union, Melbourne, Australia. It began with a Underhill quotation from *The Spiritual Life* and concluded with this Prayer for Understanding by Underhill.

“O Lord Christ who, in this difficult world, was tempted in all things, as I am, yet fell into no sin, look pitifully, I pray you, upon me. Guide me with your adorable wisdom. Teach me in everything and in every hour what I ought to do. You alone know, both that I suffer, and what I need. To you that perfect path that I should walk is known. Show it to me and teach me how to walk it. Keep me, O Saviour, in body, mind and spirit, for into your strong and gentle hands I commit myself. Give me, O Lord, I beseech you, courage to pray for light and to endure the light here, where I am on this world of yours, which should reflect your beauty but which we have spoiled and exploited. Cast your radiance on the dark places; those crimes and stupidities I like to ignore and gloss over. Show up my pretensions, my poor little claims and achievements, my childish assumptions of importance, my mock heroism.

Take me out of the confused half-light in which I live. Enter and irradiate every situation and every relationship. Show me my opportunities; the raw material of love, of sacrifice, of holiness lying at my feet disguised under homely appearance; and only seen as it truly is...in your light. Amen.” Galeandrew73@gmail.com

“Work for the Spirit: Medievalism, the Arts and Crafts Movement, and the Development of a Practical Spirituality in Evelyn Underhill’s Novel *The Gray World*,” by Carla Arnell. *Studies in Medievalism* 28 (Summer 2019).

Ron Dart reviewed *Mystical Landscapes: From Vincent van Gogh to Emily Carr*, edited by Katherine Lochman with Roald Nasgaard and Bogomila Welsch-Ovcharov. N.Y.: Del Monico Books, 2016 for *Imago* (Spring 2017).

Clovis Salgado Gontijo, associate professor of Philosophy and Theology on the Faculdade Jesuita de Filosofia e Teologia, Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil, gave an M. A. course on Underhill’s thought.

The Practical Mystic. *Evelyn Underhill and Her Writings*. By Raymond Chapman. Norwich: Canterbury, 2012.

“Listening to the Life of Evelyn Underhill.” By M. E. Downey M.A. Dissertation, Concordia University, Montreal, 2011.

“Evelyn Underhill (1875-1941), The Practical Mystic” by Michelle M. Sauer. In Jane Chance, ed., 183-199 *Women Medievalists and the Academy* (Madison WI: University of Wisconsin, 2005).

“The Baron, his Niece and Friends. Friedrich von Hugel as Spiritual Director, 1915-1925.” By Rachel Wrigley-Carr. PhD Dissertation, University of St. Andrews, Scotland, 2013.

