

Maundy Thursday 09

Living in Skin

“God loves flesh and blood, no matter what kind of shape it’s in – sick or well, lovely or irregular,” God loves bodies. Having made them and tended them God loves us and calls us to love ourselves, our own bodies and souls and to love the embodied souls of others. Jesus chose the patterns we celebrate this night, food and drink, washing and touching. Jesus shied away from no body and gave us a way of remembering that we cannot ignore.

This is not a night for talking overmuch or thinking too much. It is a night for doing, for concrete important tasks, for important ways of being together that will teach us what we need to know. This is re-membrance and not re-enactment. This is beginning to live so that the time and location boundaries are thin. This is kairos time, holy time, God’s own time and place in us.

The hope is that from a meal time full of friendship, tending to each other’s hunger and thirst, we will move from every table meal to the meal we share and serve on Sunday. The washing and tending extends as well to every embrace in the world, in the peace, in the marking, the giving and receiving of forgiveness. Have you washed a baby, a newly dead body, the back or feet of someone you share your life with? Have you who live alone been waiting for a long time to be touched with tonight’s tenderness?

Jesus gave the disciples some things to think about and puzzle over and he gave them things they could get their hands on, things that would require getting close enough to each other to touch, taste, swallow, “things to wash that are attached to human beings so that you cannot bend over them without being drawn into one another’s lives.”

Do this, he said, not believe this, but do this in remembrance of me. How do you wear your skin this evening? How will you wear it in the world God loves tomorrow?

From the apocryphal Acts of John, Jesus sang to his disciples at their last meal:

Glory be to thee, Father.
Glory be to thee, Word. Glory be to thee, Grace. Amen.
Glory be to thy glory. Amen.

I would be saved, and I would save. Amen.
I would be loosed and I would loose. Amen.
I would be wounded, and I would wound. Amen.
I would be born and I would bear. Amen.
I would eat and I would be eaten. Amen.
I would hear and I would be heard. Amen.
Grace danceth and I would pipe. Dance ye all. Amen.
I would mourn. Lament ye all. Amen.
Whoso danceth not, knoweth not what cometh to pass. Amen.

I would flee and I would stay. Amen.
I would adorn and I would be adorned. Amen.
I would be united and I would unite. Amen.
A house I have not and I have houses. Amen.
A lamp am I to thee that beholdest me. Amen.
A mirror am I to thee that perceivest me. Amen.
A door am I to thee that knockest at me. Amen.
A way am I to thee, a wayfarer. Amen.

Thus, my beloved, having danced with us, the Lord went forth.

Resources: [An Altar in the World](#), Barbara Brown Taylor, 2009
Liturgical resources, St. Gregory of Nyssa parish, USA