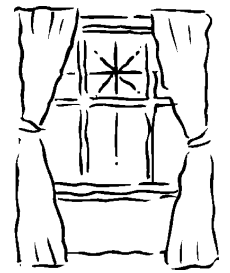


Looking Out My Window, December 17, 2021



“Not for the faint of tongue.” So proclaimed the paper liner in a tin of wintergreen Altoids mints. That brought a chuckle—my Tabasco-conditioned palate does not find wintergreen Altoids particularly challenging. Then, my thoughts went to Holy Eucharist. Have my palate and my spiritual make up become so conditioned by repetition that I’ve forgotten that it is “not for the faint of tongue.”

Prayer C says, “Forgive us for coming to this table for solace only and not for strength; for pardon only and not for renewal.” In Holy Eucharist the Christ who lived, died, and was risen enters directly into our experience as we receive his body and blood. Such an encounter certainly is not for the faint of tongue. The Eucharistic experience calls us to become what we eat, to take on more fully the likeness of Christ—his ways of loving and relating, his radical, risk-taking commitment, sharing in his death, and his servant style of life.

That does not mean that the Holy Table is an exclusive place, accessible only to the spiritual elite and radically committed. That gets things in reverse. Jesus shared his table with all kinds of people, even those unwanted by the religious establishment. But, those who shared table with Jesus experienced radical transformation. (See Luke 19:1-10 for the example of Zacchaeus.)

Like Jesus, we seek to make the Holy Table accessible to all and to live in the tension between what we are in and of ourselves and what we can become through God’s transforming love experienced in Eucharist. As Gordon Lathrop put it, “The task of the assembly is a task of polarity: make the center strong, the symbols large, the words of Christ clear, and make that center accessible, the circle large, the periphery permeable.” (*Holy Things: A Liturgical Theology* [Fortress, 1993], p. 132).

And, for those of us who regularly come to the Holy Table, my Altoids tin liner serves as a heads up—“Not for the faint of tongue.” We refuse to allow the weekly repetition to dull our spiritual palates to the revolutionary, transforming Christ we are receiving in bread and wine. May we pray, “Jesus, Savior, may your presence in bread and wine take me wherever you desire me to go. Make my life bread for the spiritually starved in my relational world.”

“Not for the faint of tongue.”

God’s peace,

David

David W. Perkins
Interim Rector