



Thin Places

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The Gift of the Sacred Wound . . .

by the Rev. Jim Dodge

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An ecumenical sampler of events and resources for spiritual growth, with a particular interest in the contemplative spiritual journey, published by the Spiritual Growth Community of Westminster Presbyterian Church



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www.eWestminster.org

When the physicians diagnosed a pressure wound deep within my body, I was overcome with grief. Not only was I about to face multiple future surgeries and hospitalizations, I was ordered to stay home, lie on my stomach or side, and be prepared for a recovery time that could range from months to years. My life came to a screeching halt.

The doctors told me that this was not a small surface wound but one that went “all the way to the sacrum,” the large, triangular bone in the lower part of my spine. The wound had obviously started some time ago but had not manifested itself until it broke through my skin.

In the dark days of being homebound with no end in sight, I cried out to God that I had had enough. Years earlier I’d been diagnosed with cancer and, in the course of radiation treatment, nerves were damaged in my legs, causing muscle weakness and atrophy. Eventually, I needed a wheelchair for mobility and—over time—pressure from sitting had created a deep, extensive wound in a location notoriously hard to heal.

Despite my need of a wheelchair, I hadn’t been used to long periods of inactivity. I was engaged in life, offering spiritual direction, working with City House, the non-profit I had founded, teaching at my church, and using adaptive equipment to play golf and tennis and ride my handcycle. I was devastated to give all that up in obedience to the health care professionals who implored me to “stay off the wound,” on my stomach or on my side.

In the solitude of my home I had time to pray, read, journal and to pay attention to whatever might be stirring in my soul. During one of those reflective times, I wondered if there might be a relationship between the sacrum and sacred. Sacrum. Sacred. Searching the internet, I discovered an amazing connection. The word sacrum comes from the Latin sacer meaning “sacred.” The sacrum was thus considered a sacred bone. Specifically, it was believed that the sacrum could not be destroyed and that it was the part of the body that would allow someone to rise from the dead.

I couldn’t believe what I was reading. Could it be that this wound was a place of new life, of resurrection? Was it beyond the realm of possibility to think that my wound was “of God” and that God was encouraging me to see it in a broader perspective than simply a physical ailment in need of healing? Was it possible that this sacral wound was indeed a sacred wound? Could this open wound literally be a portal between this world and another? A thin place, indeed!

“*The Sacred Wound*” . . . continues on page 2

Look for *Thin Places* at: www.thinplaces.us or www.eWestminster.org/thin_places

In the many days of my homebound recovery that followed, I had much time to ponder the possibility that my wound could actually be sacred. Perhaps God was using a time of pain and injury and uncertainty to bring about a transformation of my life. Maybe this wounding experience was an invitation to let go of my "old life" and allow myself some time for a "new life" to emerge. I was a typical "doer," but I had an inkling that the dormant "being" part of me was awakening. I could image toxins of fear, anger and self-loathing draining out of my body through the wound opening and being replaced by compassion, serenity and forgiveness. In short, I had this sense that transformation was taking place. It was a powerful experience. . . .

In the process of treating this wound, I had kept focusing on, "How did this happen?" Perhaps a better question would have been, "Why did it happen?" For I feel now that I can affirm with Ignatius that "everything has the potential of calling forth in us a deeper response to our life in God." In the mystery of God's ways, the "why" of things is that we are continually being encouraged to be the persons we were created to be. And that formation often does not happen without wounding.

This experience has been intensely personal to me, yet it is not unique to me. To take a single example, a movie now showing, "Invictus," brings to mind Nelson Mandela's long imprisonment on Robben Island where, according to Bishop Tutu, he underwent a profound transformation. In the beginning he was "forthright and belligerent," but in jail he "mellowed." He "began to discover depths of resilience and spiritual attributes that he would not have known he had." He allowed suffering to ennoble him, and found himself "able to be gentle and

“. . . a strange gracing of my darkness . . .”

"I was caught suddenly by a sweep of reverence, by a sensation that made we want to sink to my knees. For somehow I knew that I had stumbled upon an epiphany, a strange gracing of my darkness. . . .

For that was the moment when the knowledge descended into my heart and I understood. REALLY understood. Crisis, change, all the upheavals that blister the spirit and leave us groping—they aren't voices simply of pain but, also, of creativity. And if we would only listen, we might hear such times as beckoning us to a season of waiting, to a place of being, a place of fertile emptiness."

Sue Monk Kidd, *When the Heart Waits*

compassionate towards others."

The experience is an old one, yet ever new and ever potent. Our wounding actually becomes a gift. God is giving us the opportunity to be broken, to be empty, to surrender once again. Jesus offered the paradox that those who "lose their life for my sake will find it." Wounds that bring loss also offer us the opportunity to discover more of that "true self" that God intended us to be.

As I write this, my wound is still not healed. It has been almost four years. Although it has improved so that I am no longer homebound, it still requires regular medical attention. Some days it's hard for me to remember that this wound is a gift. And on far too many days I find myself not being as compassionate or serene or as forgiving as I truly want to be. But on other days I hear God whisper in my ear, "Trust Me"—a reminder that God is in control and all I need to do is to receive the gift of the sacred wound with gratitude.

The Rev. Jim Dodge is a retired United Methodist minister, a spiritual director, and the founder of City House, which for the last eight years has used volunteer spiritual directors to offer spiritual guidance to poor and marginalized members of our society. (For more about City House, see "Will you drink from this cup?" in the One-Time Opportunities section below.) Jim may be reached at: jamesadodge@msn.com.

ONGOING OPPORTUNITIES

The ARC Retreat Center

. . . offers renewal for those who would repair the world: it is where healers come for healing, peacemakers find peace, and caregivers are cared for.

Action, Reflection and Celebration join hands at ARC to nurture the life of the spirit in people who look inward for health in body and soul while reaching outward to foster positive change in the world.

Since ARC's founding in 1977, a resident staff has modeled intentional community and shared a simple, sustainable, spiritual lifestyle that is passed on to guests. The welcome—warm and embracing yet respectful of silence and solitude—creates safe space for change to be born and grow.

The central log lodge, smaller cottage, and private hermitage are all tucked beneath majestic white pines, a remnant of the forests that graced Minnesota before the days of logging and agriculture. ARC stewards ninety acres of pristine wetlands and woodlands featuring trails for walking, skiing, snowshoeing, and a labyrinth. One

first-time visitor observed, “ARC fits its environment so perfectly it’s as though God planted it here.”

Groups or individuals on retreat experience a home-like atmosphere and healthy hand-made meals full of fresh organic ingredients, often locally grown. Spiritual companionship, Reiki, and therapeutic massage may be arranged, and special diets are accommodated. Retreatants are welcome to join the community for twice-daily meditation and weekly yoga sessions.

ARC also offers special programs for the recovery community, as well as space and time apart for writers and artists to hone their crafts.

“The extravagant welcome and authentic spirit of all at the ARC restore and feed me on my journey,” a guest wrote in thanks following his stay.

To learn more about how ARC may feed your journey,

- visit www.arcretreat.com
- or call 763-689-3540

to schedule your private or group retreat.

A Midwinter Retreat Special Offer at ARC

During February and March, experience the quiet wonder of winter in the woods, in the comfort of the ARC lodge or the privacy of the Hermitage. Tuesday afternoons through Thursday afternoons (three days and two nights). All meals—with the community in the lodge, or quietly in the Hermitage—are included.

One recent guest rejoices and confesses, “The serenity I have when I am here is always available to me if only I remember to seek it.” For information: 763.689.3540.

Studium: Visiting Scholars Program

Since 1992, Studium has encouraged and honored scholarship as a sacred ministry. It offers visiting scholars office space in a monastic setting and—even more importantly—the mutual support that is so crucial for sustained, productive work.

The term “scholar” is much broader than “academic,” including anyone who keeps on learning, for whom thinking and finding things out and imagining and communicating are fundamental to the meaning of life.

Do you know someone who might like to read *Thin Places?* (It’s sent free to all who request it.)

Do you know of an up-coming “Opportunity” that might be of interest to others?

If ‘yes’ to either, please contact Kathy Fisher at: kfisher@wpc-mpls.org or 612.332.3421

Women and men:

- who are in broad agreement with Benedictine cultural and social commitments—e.g., awareness of God; community; prayer and work; listening; hospitality; stewardship; peace—
- who have a project in mind or underway but who need time away from daily distractions in a place where thinking and writing are nurtured, and
- for whom an interdisciplinary, intergenerational, interfaith and intercultural setting offers an appealing venue for their own work . . .

are encouraged to investigate this Opportunity:

Visits may be for a week, a month, or more

Saint Benedict’s Monastery, St. Joseph, MN

For information: www.sbm.osb.org/studium or

Ann Marie Biermaier, OSB, Ed.D at: 320.363.7172 or abiermaier@csbsju.edu.

Holy Island in Minneapolis

This new Ongoing Opportunity, which began meeting last September, is sponsored by the Community of Aidan and Hilda, a worldwide community of Christians who seek “to cradle a 21st Century way of faith by following the examples of the Celtic saints.”

The Community seeks to draw upon the Celtic saints, who were “some of the original evangelical, catholic, incarnational, charismatic, ecological, prayer-filled, poor biased, social justice Christians—just as so many of us now aspire to be.” The local “**Holy Island**” gathering now offers:

- A Meeting Place for those who want to apply Celtic Christian insights in their 21st Century life
- A Fellowship for those who want to support each other in forming and living a Way of Life
- A Counter-Culture for those who want to live in Simplicity, Purity and Accountability

This is a truly new Opportunity. All who think they might be interested are encouraged to come:

2nd & 4th Tuesdays: Feb. 9, 23; March 9, 23 ...

5.30 p.m., Simple Meal—6:00-7:30 p.m., Island Time

**“If we can be perfectly quiet
and perfectly still
with no attempt
to overcome, destroy, remove, or escape
from any situation or condition,
the flow of the Spirit
will rush in
and there will be freedom.”**

Joel Goldsmith

Grace University Lutheran Church,
324 Harvard St., Minneapolis
For information: Paul Martin (U.S. Guardian,
Community of Aidan Hilda) at 507.302.9160 or
pauljohn@frontiernet.net **or** The Rev. Dr. Jerry Doherty
(Chaplain, University Episcopal Community) at
651.439.4675

Fr. Doherty may also be contacted for information
about an upcoming (July 10-24) pilgrimage: *Thin Places
in Celtic Wales: Where Time and Eternity Meet.*

Taizé Prayer

Taizé is a reflective, meditative prayer in a peaceful setting.
Gather for an hour of prayer to experience Christ's pres-
ence. Encounter the mystery of God through the beauty
of simplicity. Allow yourself to be open and receptive and
let the prayers permeate your mind. Relax and join in
prayer and song.

In the sacred space of contemplative silence God
often touches us deeply, and healing and transformation
happen. The reconciling prayer of Jesus, "that all may be
one," is your special invitation to come. People of all
faith traditions are welcome.

Recently reported or updated Opportunities:

First Thursdays, 6:00-7:00 p.m.

St. Francis Convent, in the Chapel
116 8th Avenue SE, Little Falls, MN
For information: 320.632.0668 or
franciscanlife@fslf.org.

Second Fridays, 7:00-8:00 p.m.

Minnehaha United Methodist Church
3701 East 50th Street, Minneapolis
For information: 612.721.6231/612. or
dianelenge5616@msn.com.

Fruit that grows in vulnerability

"There is a great difference between successfulness and
fruitfulness . . . Success comes from strength, control,
and respectability. A successful person has the energy to
create something, to keep control over its development,
and to make it available in large quantities. Success
brings many rewards and often fame.

Fruits, however, come from weakness and vulnerabil-
ity. And fruits are unique. A child is the fruit conceived
in vulnerability, community is the fruit born through
shared brokenness, and intimacy is the fruit that grows
through touching one another's wounds.

Let's remind one another that what brings us true
joy is not successfulness but fruitfulness.

Henri Nouwen, *Bread for the Journey*

Every Second Monday (Feb. 8, 12; March 8, 23 ...), 6:45-8:00 p.m.

Taizé followed by Centering
Christ the King Lutheran Church
1900 NW 7th Street, New Brighton
For information: 651.454.5351 or
joannnesser@msn.com.

Each Wednesday during Lent, 6:30-7:00 p.m.

also:

A "Sound" Spirituality

Dr. Dirk Lange, formerly a Taizé brother, and Dr. Melanie
Ohnstad explore the multi-dimensions of music and
prayer through the *Psalms*, the Taizé Community, and
much more.

Saturday, Feb. 6—8:30 a.m. - Noon

Westminster Presbyterian Church
1200 Marquette Avenue, Minneapolis
For information or registration: 612.332.3421 or
kfisher@wpc-mpls.org.

ONE-TIME OPPORTUNITIES

The Prayer of the Heart:

The Christian Contemplative Tradition

The Christian contemplative tradition has its roots in an
ancient history. We want to trace that lineage, offering
the ancient practices that are meant to restore humanity
to its "fullness of being." Humans are basically asleep, says
this tradition, with the potential to wake up to the higher
realms of Reality that exist all around and within us, **if** we
could awaken our "heart".

This very quest—in answer to the heart's deepest
longings—is the very means by which we come into the
fullness of being. It's the reason we are invited to move
from our "conditioned" minds into the heart, where we
have the immediate unmediated experience of God, the
Spirit. Participants will be encouraged to make this explo-
ration their very own:

Six Mondays, Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22, March 1, 8— 7:30-9:00 p.m.

The House of Prayer in the City
425 Oak Grove Street, Minneapolis, MN
For information or registration: 320-363-3293
or houseprayer@csbsju.edu.

Ministry & Memoir: A writing group for clergy and spiritual leaders

This writing group for clergy and spiritual leaders delves into the sacred dimension of memory. Together we will practice writing for no audience as a means of inviting the Spirit onto the page; we will read excerpts from spiritual memoirs to inspire our own writing; and we will learn how shaping our stories infuses them—and us—with fresh meaning and power. By co-creating on the page, we exercise our capacity to be co-creators in the broader spheres of our work:

Five Thursdays, Feb. 4–March 25, 9:30–11:30 a.m.

Living Spirit United Methodist Church

4501 Bloomington Avenue, Minneapolis

For information and registration: 612.729.4857 or

Elizabeth@spiritualmemoir.com or

www.spiritualmemoir.com.

Will You Drink from this Cup?

As City House has gone about its work—“offering spiritual guidance to the poor, inspiring hope”—it has learned that its ministry “is as much about God’s work within each of us as it is about the persons on the margins of society with whom we are privileged to walk.”

This understanding—that this experience, this connection with the poor, can become a spiritual practice for all who are involved—has prompted us to offer “Will You Drink from this Cup?” again, in cooperation with the Christos, Loyola and Sacred Ground Spirituality Centers.

Many of those who took part in the two earlier offerings have said that the experience was a perfect match for a hunger they felt inside them. We invite you to attend to a hunger you may have felt, to check out this offering, to see if it might be for you:

Orientation & Invitation, Friday, Feb. 4, 7:00–9:00 p.m.

then, if it feels right, go on:

Six Thursdays (7:00–9:15 p.m.): Feb. 18, March 4, 18,

April 15, 29, May 13—plus an all-day inner-city

pilgrimage on Saturday, March 27

Offered by City House at:

Loyola Spirituality Center

389 North Oxford Street, Saint Paul

For information or registration: 763.227.0686 or

tomallen@city-house.org.

Spirit-Matter Experiential Prayer

This workshop is for anyone wanting to honor their humanness and wholeness more. Integration of spirit/mind/body will be encouraged through explanation and practice of deep breathing and progressive relaxation (connecting body to spirit), mindfulness (connecting

mind to spirit), and gratitude (connecting spirit to spirit). Prayer opportunities using our bodies will include aromas, plants, music, poetry, and food:

Saturday, February 6, 9 a.m. to noon

Christos Center for Spiritual Formation

1212 Holly Drive, Lino Lakes

For information: 651-653-8207 or

www.christoscenter.org.

Introduction to Centering Prayer

Learn the ancient practice of prayer that heightens the sense of God’s presence in your life. When words and activity become too much, it is time for quiet in the arms of God. Centering Prayer teaches a person how to respond to God’s invitation to deeper relationship through contemplative stillness. Its roots are within the Christian heritage as taught by the Desert Fathers and Mothers:

Saturday, Feb. 6, 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

The Benedictine Center, St. Paul’s Monastery

2675 Benet Road, Maplewood

For information or registration: 651.777.7251 or

benedictinecenter@stpaulsmonastery.org.

“. . . a new way of looking . . .”

Brother Eric of Taizé lived in the Hell’s Kitchen neighborhood in New York City during the rough and tumble years on the West Side where the poorest of the working class, the often marginalized lived packed together with the more violent members of the underworld.

Drawing upon his experiences, Br. Eric wrote, *The Secret of Hell’s Kitchen: a Parable for Young People*, in which Professor Rhododendron—near the end of the tale—encourages the two children, “Open your eyes!”

And when they do, they begin to see that—despite outward circumstances—there are possibilities around them:

“You are a magician!” exclaimed Patty, enthusiastically.

‘No! It is you who are. Things remain just things, but your way of looking at them is what changes everything. That is the magic: to have a new way of looking at things.’

Br. Eric, *The Secret of Hell’s Kitchen*

[Br. Eric was also a gifted illustrator and painter. He created the wooden Taizé Cross which is now present at Taizé Evening Prayer services at churches throughout the area.]

A Double-Header: Town Hall Forum & Celtic Worship

All are invited to join **Jim Wallace**, editor-in-chief of *Sojourners* magazine, for his presentation, “Rediscovering Values: A Moral Compass for the New Economy,” at an unusual evening offering of the Westminster Town Hall Forum.

Music beginning at 6:30 precedes the Forum, and Jim will be available to sign copies of his newest book, *Rediscovering Values: On Wall Street, Main Street, and Your Street*, at a public reception afterwards.

All are also invited to come early for the monthly **Celtic Evening Prayer**, a service of prayer, music, Scripture and quiet.

Drawing upon the rich tradition of the Iona Community in Scotland, the songs and prayers speak of the Creation, of God’s desire for wholeness and justice, and of our hope in the Spirit that surrounds us, in everything we do:

Thursday, February 11, 6:00-8:30 p.m.

6:00 Celtic Evening Prayer

7:00 Westminster Town Hall Forum with Jim Wallis

Westminster Presbyterian Church

Celtic Prayer in the Chapel; Jim Wallis in the Sanctuary
1200 Marquette Avenue, Minneapolis

For information: 612.332.3421 or
kfisher@wpc-mpls.org.

Pilgrimage of the Heart:

Extending Centering Prayer into Daily life

Minnesota Contemplative Outreach is happy to announce the return of Susan Komis to lead another retreat. She is a member of the Faculty of Contemplative Outreach, Ltd., and a frequent retreat leader. Prayer practices and experiences of this retreat will include our human condition, Welcoming Prayer (a practice of letting go in daily

**“We First Americans believe profoundly in silence—
the sign of a perfect equilibrium.**

**Silence is the absolute poise of balance of body,
mind and spirit.**

If you ask us, ‘What is silence?’

we will answer, ‘It is the Great Mystery.

The Holy Silence is God’s voice.’

If you ask, ‘What are the fruits of silence?’

**we will answer, ‘They are self-control,
true courage or endurance, patience,
dignity and reverence.**

Silence is the cornerstone of character.”

Ohiyesa, “Sacred Journey”

life), forgiveness, two sessions of Centering Prayer and discussions. Bring a bag lunch for an intentional meal:

Saturday, February, 13, 8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Colonial Church of Edina

6200 Colonial Way, Edina, MN

For information or reservations: 952-890-9633 or
diane.boruff3@gmail.com.

Ash Wednesday Retreat

by Turning, Turning, We Come ‘Round Right

What is the “turning” that God desires for you this Lent? Begin your Lenten journey by spending a quiet day of prayer and reflection focused on how God, the Master Potter, lovingly shapes and reshapes the clay of our being until we “come ‘round right”:

Wednesday, February 17, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

also:

Questions Jesus Asked

“What are you looking for?” is just one of the **183 questions** asked by Jesus in the Christian Scriptures. Join others for this Lenten retreat to discover how Jesus’ first century questions can strengthen our twenty-first century faith:

Friday, March 12 at 7:30 p.m. to Saturday,

March 13 at 4:00 p.m.

Spirituality Center, Saint Benedict’s Monastery, St. Joseph

For information or registration: 320.363.7116

or dmanuel@csbsju.edu or www.sbm.osb.org.

Connection and Balance

Dr. Dirk Lange, former Taizé brother and Luther Seminary Worship Professor, will explore the important connection and balance between prayer/contemplation and social justice. All are welcome; there is no charge, but RSVPs appreciated:

Three Thursdays, Feb. 18, 25, March 4,

6:00-8:00 p.m.

Soup supper at 6:00—presentation at 7:00

St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church

2136 Carter Avenue, St. Paul

For information and RSVPs: 651.645.3058 or
rector@stmatthewsmn.org.

“Who Is My Neighbor?”

Have you ever suddenly seen some thing or some person whom you may have passed by many times before without noticing?

These evenings during Lent are to help us to become better at seeing with “the eyes of our hearts.” We’ll gather for a simple soup supper and then have time to visit with a guest from the local community so that we can become

more aware of those around us, to see more clearly who our neighbors are. All are welcome for these quiet but encouraging Lenten evenings:

Mondays of Lent: Feb. 22, March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

6:30-8:00 p.m., soup—followed by reflection

Sabbath House, 3228 Portland Ave. So., Minneapolis
Please RSVP to 612.822.2623.

J. Philip Newell: “A New Harmony: The Spirit, the Earth and the Human Soul”

Internationally known author and scholar J. Philip Newell will explore the distinctive beliefs and practices of early Celtic Christianity and their implications for living our Christian faith today. Don't miss this opportunity to learn about the uniqueness of the Celtic Christian tradition and how it can inform and deepen our faith:

Friday Evening — Sunday Morning, February 26-28

Colonial Church, 6200 Colonial Way, Edina

For information, watch www.colonialchurch.org or call 952.925.2711.

Philip will also be at Wisdom Ways

Morning Liturgy and Presentation:

Thursday, February 25, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

Carondelet Center, 1890 Randolph Ave., St. Paul
For information and registration: 651.696.2788
or www.wisdomwayscenter.org.

Evening Presentation followed by

Celtic Contemplative Worship Service:

Thursday, February 25, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Pilgrim Lutheran Church, 1935 St. Clair Ave., St. Paul
For information and registration: 651.699.6886.

The Spiritual Lives of Children and Youth

Do our children have faith? Will our youth have faith? How might a congregation nurture the spiritual lives of children and youth? This course will explore these and other foundational questions which you—as parents and/or church leaders—ask.

Congregations both provide opportunities for faith development and help parents to create faith growth opportunities in the home. We will explore this partnership, as well as look at specific ways to nurture their spirituality, including age appropriate spiritual practices:

Two Saturdays, Mar. 20 & Apr. 24, 9:30a.m.-3:30p.m.

Offered by United Theological Seminary at:

Christ United Methodist Church
400 Fifth Avenue SW, Rochester, MN

For information or registration: 651.255.6137 or www.unitedseminary.edu, then click on “Community Programming.”

Upcoming “Opportunities” keep coming and keep encroaching on “Reading Opportunities” space!

But attention must be invited to Richard Rohr's most recent book, *The Naked Now: Learning to See as the Mystics See*.

A possible Lenten read, it is rich and concise and might best be read and thought about a few pages at a time. Here is a first taste, from two pages headed, “*Prayer is Resonance*”:

“ . . . The word is ‘resonance.’ Prayer is actually setting out a tuning fork. All you can really do in the spiritual life is get tuned to receive the always present message. Once you are tuned, you *will* receive. And it has nothing to do with the worthiness or the group you belong to, but only inner resonance and a capacity for mutuality
(*Matt. 7:7-11*). The Sender is absolutely and always present and broadcasting; the only change is with the receiver station. . . .”

There is much, much more. You may wish to see for yourself. . . .

Meditation and Visionary Seeing in the Christian Tradition

Many will see this as a “save the date” Upcoming Opportunity: **The Rev. Dr. Cynthia Bourgeault** will be returning to the Twin Cities in April for a weekend series of presentations. Full information will be included in the next issue:

April 23-25: Friday, 7:00-9:00 p.m.; Saturday,

9:00 a.m.-noon & 1:30-3:00 p.m.;

Sunday, 10:00 a.m.-noon

The House of Hope Presbyterian Church
797 Summit Avenue, Saint Paul

For information: 651.227.6311

“Wisdom is the art of balancing the suffering with the joy, the known with the unknown; it is a way of linking the whole of life together in a new and deeper unity. . . .”

Wisdom is the art of living in rhythm with your soul, your life, and the divine.”

John O'Donohue
Anam Cara: A Book of Celtic Wisdom

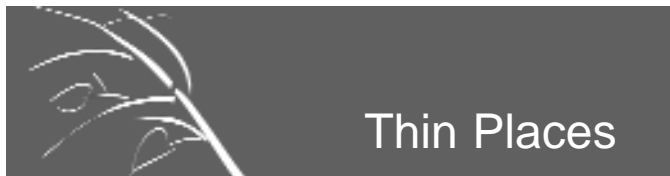


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“the Sacred wound . . .”
“ . . . Foot Washing . . .”



AFTERWORDS

Foot Washing

A reader tells of visiting and of being welcomed at a small Catholic church in Abiquiu, New Mexico, during Holy Week, for a Maundy Thursday service which included foot washing—a first-time experience.

At the appropriate time, six elders from the congregation came forward, sat on six chairs facing the congregation, and had their feet washed by the young priest. These six then washed the feet of six more congregants, and so it continued.

As the visitor waited for his turn, he was thinking about and to some extent visualizing Jesus washing the feet of his disciples. When the time came, he went forward, knelt before a chair in which a woman was sitting, dipped his hands in the water and began to gently wash her feet.

The moment his hands touched her feet, a powerful feeling of warmth and love flooded over him . . . filling him with a great sense of yielding, and of peace. Then he took his place in the chair, a man washed his feet, and the service went forward to its conclusion.

Worship ended, and the people began to leave, but with almost no talking. The people seemed still to be feeling, and to be embracing, what they had experienced.

As the visitor was walking, feeling centered, across the parking lot towards his car, a woman hurried up to him, the woman whose feet he had washed, a woman whom he had never seen before.

As she caught up with him, he turned, and she said to him, “I just had to tell you that the moment your hands touched my feet, a feeling of warmth, and love, and peace flooded over me.”