

Faith In Practice

Life Changing Medical Mission

This Holy Night



Tonight, he will offer to wash your feet again. He will stretch out his hand to you with bread, with wine. There shall be love in his eyes. And, sorrow. There shall be hope and promise. Pain and loss. All there in his eyes, as he offers himself to you once again. Yet, even as he asks you to draw near to the heart of God through him on this Holy Night, he will sense your tentativeness. Your, our, hesitation, as we stand on the edge of what is to come. What must come, as Jesus said, so that the grain of wheat that will die might bear fruit once again. For us.

Tonight is quiet. No sound of crowd shouting “crucify,” no sound of cracking whip, or anguished scream. Only silence. As if time is slowing down, even standing still, bowing in reverence before the rush and crush of the day to come. Only the words, the Light came into the world, but the people preferred darkness to the Light.

In La Merced Church in Antigua, Guatemala, there are three statues of Jesus displayed only during Lent. Carved and painted in the 16th century, they transcend time. In the statues, Jesus has been scourged, his knees and back bloodied. In one statue, he crawls. Each year, I make a point to spend some time with these statues. They call to me.

This year, as I sat in the pew before my statues, a man approached. He knelt on one knee, bowing his head. He raised his right hand and rested it lightly, carefully, on the base of the statue in which Jesus leans on a pillar, his hands bound, his eyes looking down. From my angle, it appeared as if Jesus’ eyes were looking down upon the bowed head of this man. The man did not move for a long time. He was as still as the statue before which he knelt. When he finally rose and quietly left, I drew near to the statue and looked up into Jesus’ eyes. And, I saw it anew in the eyes of this 16th century statue. Sorrow for me. Not for the excruciating pain that Jesus’ body was enduring, the open

wounds, the knowledge of what was yet to come, but his sorrow for me. As if his own pain was inconsequential; it was my pain he wished to take on. My pain, more important than his own. I saw his sorrow and his love for me. Drawing me in, asking me yet once again, will you let me wash your feet, let me love you? See how much love I have for you? The man who bowed before this inanimate statue could see it. Could feel it. And, yet, I could not, until I saw it through this faithful man's eyes who bowed before Jesus, this faithful man who had not even known I was watching him.

So tonight, as I come to Jesus' table, I will be thinking of the man who knelt in La Merced, as Jesus asks me once again, will you let me wash your feet? Share with me my bread, my wine? As he tells me, know who you are. My beloved. See how much love I have for you? So much love that my own pain means nothing. Come, eat. Draw near to the heart of my father. Then, follow me. Together we shall enter into the pain of others. For that is where I reside. That is where I will rise to new life. For them. For you. Now and forever.

Rev. Linda L. McCarty

For all of you who enter into another's pain, risking self, with him, in him, through him, in this mission, I give God thanks. May your Good Friday and Easter Sunday be truly blessed.



Don't miss our **10th Annual Women's Luncheon: *I Call Upon You*** on **Thursday, May 4.**

We will be celebrating answered prayer in this life-changing medical mission. For more information and to reserve your place, visit www.faithinpractice.org/womensluncheon.