

In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Amen.

The prologue of John's Gospel ends with,

“And the Word became flesh and lived among us,

and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son,  
full of grace and truth...

From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.

The law indeed was given through Moses;  
grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

No one has ever seen God.

It is God the only Son,  
who is close to the Father's heart,  
who has made him known.”

As we listened again to the story of the passion and death of Jesus Christ  
it is hard to see where the “grace upon grace” lies in a crucifixion.

What could possibly be the “grace and truth”  
that comes to us through this horrible death?

To gaze on the cross is to be confronted by evil in the world.

To remember again the evil we have done to others,  
and the evil done to us.

But there is more,  
and it comes to us in a mystery.

It is the mystery of the wounds of Christ  
and how Christ's wounds are intimately connected to our wounds,  
our own woundedness.

One of the hardest things we have to do in life  
is to come to terms with the reality that we are not perfect,  
to let go of the fallacy of “If only I was good enough.”

It is very difficult to make this journey  
from thinking that we are good enough because of what we do,  
to the place of becoming aware  
that we are good because we are made by God.

Yes, we are told this,  
but being told and knowing in our hearts,  
are two very different places.

It is the path of wisdom,  
but it is not an easy path,  
for it is along this path that the perfect image we have of ourselves,  
you know, the one we only admit to inside our head,  
becomes deconstructed,  
as all the false realities that prop up our perfect self-image  
are revealed as the lies they really are.

This deconstruction is not easy for we cling to our delusions.

They must be torn from us  
and we are wounded in the process,  
often deeply wounded.

I would like you to entertain the possibility  
that these wounds are a gift from God.

I know they don't feel like a gift,  
oh do I know that,  
but they are.

They are an intimate part  
of what it means to be fully human.  
And here is the mysterious part,  
the part that haunts us as we gaze on the cross this night.

What if this woundedness that lies at the heart of our humanity,  
*is* the image of God we are made in?



We believe we are made in the image of God.  
It is easy for us to see the perfection we long for  
and invent within us  
as the image of God.

What if that is a false image?

What if woundedness is not something we did *to* God,  
but a defining *characteristic of* God?

What if the cross is the ultimate revelation  
of the woundedness of God?

What if the cross is what God really looks like?



We know that creation isn't perfect; it's messy.

Good, certainly, but messy.

What if it is the very act of creation  
that wounded the perfection of God?

What if when God said, "Let there be light,"

the perfection of God was torn  
to make a little space for that light.

And so it began.

We know that the resurrected Christ was known by his wounds.

Surely the power of God to resurrect Jesus  
could easily have erased those small injuries;

Nail prints in the hands and feet;

A spears print in the side.

So why *weren't* they erased?

Healed?

What if these wounds are part of the nature of God,  
indicative of wounds present in Christ even before the incarnation?

What if the cross is not a transaction, but a revelation?

A revelation that the wounds *we* bear  
are the things that have the power to shape us  
into the true image of God.

What if the dream of God is not perfection as we would see it,  
but the cross of Christ alive in our hearts  
with all the messiness that comes along with it.



In a few minutes, as we bid the Solemn Collects  
and gaze upon the cross hanging over the altar,  
ask yourself, “Where are *my* wounds?”  
“What do *I* ache for?”

Seek for the power of God behind your wounds  
and wonder, “How might my wounds have been used  
to make me a better person?”

As Christians,  
we struggle to take up our cross daily and follow Christ.

I invite you to remember tonight that the cross we each take up,  
has nails in it too.

Those nails are our nails.

So tonight, seek a way to give meaning to those nails,  
as symbols of the wounds that have been shaping you,  
as well as the wounds that injured Jesus,  
for they are wounds that are bound together  
in the mystery of the cross.

May these nails be potent and constant reminders  
of the great mystery that binds all our wounds together,  
binding us together with Christ,  
and burning the new law of love into our hearts.



“Therefore my friends... let us approach with a true heart  
in full assurance of faith,  
with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience  
and our bodies washed with pure water.”

Amen.