



# ST. STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

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**Maundy Thursday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

The subject of the meditation for Maundy Thursday is taken from the Prayer of Humble Access which we recite before the Consecration,

*“Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body and our souls washed through his most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us.”.*

**✠ In The Name of The Father and of The Son  
And of The Holy Ghost. Amen. ✠**

When I was teaching, teenagers that I taught -- sophomores primarily -- would often come to me and ask, “Why do you believe? Why do you believe in Jesus? You’re obviously a man who has been educated, and yet you profess to be connected to this mythology of Jesus Christ.” And I’d say to them that I’ve had a blessing that most of them probably haven’t had yet in their lives - - that the reason I believe is because I’ve had the privilege of being with people who have had a good passing into their eternal rest. And when you are privileged to be with somebody who passes in that manner, it changes who you are and how you see the world forever. In the several times when I’ve had the privilege to do that, it has typically followed the same pattern --

the departing is inevitably concerned with the people that they are leaving behind. Instead of receiving comfort, they are giving comfort, exhorting, strengthening the people who are getting ready to mourn them.

The other element that is really interesting is that so often they see family who have been deceased before them, and they are ushered by the ones they have loved in their life to their meeting with Jesus, to their judgment, to their reward. So you have both this very practical consolation and strengthening and this beautiful transcendent passage into something that is eternal and transcendent from what the apparent death of that person.

Jesus, on Holy Thursday, gives us the archetype of a good passing. He gathers those he loves around him; he consecrates the bread to be his Body and the wine to be his Blood. He gives them command to do the same in remembrance of Him in order to strengthen them in their journey. Remember when he had the five thousand follow him into the wilderness, how he said to his apostles, "They will faint if we do not feed them." And he knows that in our spiritual journey, we would faint without His strengthening, without nourishment, without spiritual sustenance, and he doesn't leave us without nourishment. He doesn't leave us without comfort. He doesn't leave us without the strengthening of the sacrament of the Eucharist -- of the Holy Communion. We receive his body to be in us so we will not faint on our journey back to Him.

But there's the other part of that sacrament, as with all sacraments, that not only takes care of our immediate material needs, our time of nourishment and our time of strengthening in this life, but connects us inevitably to what we are to become, to what we are meant to be, to what we have taken a brief interlude of time away from in this world -- and that is to be connected in the mystical body of Christ, to our Lord Jesus, and to receive the reflected love of God the Father for His Son Jesus Jesus, to ourselves, unworthy as we are, because

we love and acknowledge Him. The Father loves us as He loves his Son. So there is this transcendent and eternal connection that brings us through the Eucharist and makes us one with the entire body of Christ -- those who have gone before us, those who will come after us, and those who have not yet been born.

If we doubt that, we can look to the words of St. Paul in the Epistle today. He said he received the command to celebrate the Eucharist from the Lord -- not from the Christians he had persecuted, not from the other Apostles, but from the Lord. And our Lord had already departed this world when Paul received his instruction. So even through the inspiration and instruction of St. Paul from the other side, Jesus gives him the institution of the Eucharist as the means by which Paul will have the Christians that he converts connected to the mystical body of Christ.

As we are celebrating this beautiful gift that is being given to us by our Lord as he is anticipating his death, we can be joyful and thankful that he sees to our spiritual needs now and that he is building us, making us to transcend -- to change into what we are meant to be and that we will become when we are united with him again. Truly, this beautiful sacrament is how He can live in us and how we can live in Him.