

Saturday, April 12

1 Peter 2:19-25

He bore our sins

*He used his servant body to carry our sins to the Cross so we could be rid of sin, free to live the right way. His wounds became your healing.*

1 Peter 2:24 Peterson

Tuesday at the Presbytery meeting, a woman from another church and whom I've known for decades came up to me and said, "I don't believe in the Atonement." We had no time to explore in detail, but I suspect she means she doesn't believe in the 'substitutionary theory of the atonement,' the one Peter talks about here – Jesus bearing 'our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness.' NIV

I think my friend and I might find another way to realize what God does for us in Christ by joining Colleen Burlington at the Prosoption School of Iconology in NYC.

We would start with a carefully chosen wooden panel, intentionally reflecting the cross of Christ. Next we carve the board to leave an outer frame of one-to-two inches – leaving an inner recessed area representing the ark of God that will contain the image we 'write.'

Then the board gets covered. First with a piece of linen cloth soaked in glue, symbolizing the linen shroud that covered Christ's body. Then ten coats of gesso (a mixture of chalk and marble dust) to get a very smooth surface. This pure white board represents all the potential of color and light.

Now, we draw our image on the board. As icon writers, we choose one from the ancient prototypes: images of Christ, the Mother of God, gospel evangelists, prophets of old, events from the time of Jesus and the birth of the church, holy men and women through history, and those heavenly hosts (angels, archangels, cherubim and seraphim). The wooden board is being transformed.

We start with the very dark, earthy tones of pigment, and each layer gets lighter and more pure as we, like God in Creation, separate light from darkness. The icon finally radiates with a light that is not realistic or naturalistic, but transfigured, like Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration.

"When I write an icon," Colleen concludes I seek to transfigure the material medium into the spiritual, with the hope that through the grace of God my own soul will be similarly transfigured." *Jesus used his servant body to carry our sins to the Cross so we could be rid of sin, free to live the right way. His wounds became our healing.* Iconography is a path to encounter the incarnate God. "As Christ ascended Mount Tabor to become transfigured by the light of God, so the light of God, as I write an icon, also can transfigure me. I am always painting in my mind and my heart. The image of God is with me through each day and night...Iconography has revealed to me a God who is

beyond language and text, and beyond rational knowing and understanding. It has opened a window to the mysterious ever-present incarnate God.”

*A Way to Pray – write an icon*