

Sermon: Maundy Thursday (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)
Christ Church Riverdale, 9 April 2009
The Rev. Robert C. Lamborn, Rector

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 ²³ For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." ²⁵ In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

[Called the congregation's attention to the stained-glass representation of the Last Supper and spoke about the customs likely to have been observed.]

The author Parker Palmer has written [in reference to the "Velvet Revolution" that overcame Communism in Czechoslovakia], "Remembering ourselves and our power . . . requires more than recalling a few facts. Re-membering involves putting ourselves back together, recovering identity and integrity, reclaiming the wholeness of our lives. When we forget who we are, we do not merely drop some data. We dis-member ourselves with unhappy consequences for our politics, our work, our hearts."¹

Re-membering. Tonight we remember that Jesus gathered with his disciples and during a meal, took bread and wine and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me," and, "This is my blood of the new Covenant . . . Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me." The type of remembering Jesus is talking about isn't recalling a few facts; it isn't just from the neck up—having a baguette and a little sherry, and saying, "Do you remember Jesus? Sure I do—quite a nice person, so sad how he died." The type of remembering Jesus is talking about is re-membering, "putting [something] back together, recovering identity and integrity, reclaiming the wholeness of [life]." "Re-member me; put me back together; reclaim the wholeness of my life, even when I'm no longer bodily on this earth."

And the church in response to this call re-members Jesus, *as* the Body of Christ here on earth. We remember him in our hearts, and therefore in our lives. The church re-members Jesus as it lives as the body of Christ and carries out the ministry of Christ. This ministry isn't what the disciples expected as they disputed which one of them was the greatest. This ministry is the ministry of servanthood--servanthood the way Jesus served.

"Remembering . . . requires more than recalling a few facts. Re-membering involves putting ourselves back together, recovering identity and integrity, reclaiming the wholeness of our lives." By contrast, our age seems to be all about fragmentation—be it by politics or identity or preference or you name it. The mission of the church, on the other hand, is to restore all persons to unity with God and each other in Christ—to be a force for wholeness and integration in a shattering world. May we re-member Christ as we break the Bread and share the Cup together, as we continue Christ's ministry of service.

¹ Parker Palmer, *The Courage to Teach* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998), 20.