

THE STAR-THROWER

Holy Thursday

April 9, 2009

In the morning early,
I saw the folk from the village
combing the sand for starfish
which the waves had washed up
and left vulnerable.

These, the villagers would collect, kill,
and sell for profit.
That was their way.

One morning I rose earlier,
and walked on the sand by the water's edge.

There, in the distance, I saw a solitary figure
who was also looking for starfish.

Whenever he found one alive or even *just* alive,
he would lift it, kiss it,
and lay it back in the blue water,
there to be revived and to swim again.
That was his way.

Now I get up every morning,
earlier than the villagers,
early as the man.

I, the strong, no longer stretch to survive:
I kneel down to restore the weak.

Once, on a far and distant shore, a carpenter knelt
and lifted something like a starfish, I think. Dying
men and dying women. He was lifting them from a
grave, I think. From tombs of sin and brokenness
and despair. Laying them gently in living waters to
revive their heart and soul, and kindle life within
them. Real life. The kind the world had never seen
before he arrived.

Jesus was his name. A carpenter he was, who took
ordinary wood and ordinary lives and changed
them. *Transformed* them into something whole
and holy -- like himself. And weak and vulnerable
though they were, Jesus touched them with the
touch of grace, the hand of love, the presence of
the living God. And they were restored, refreshed,
raised to new life. A life that never grows too old

or wears too thin. A life with God in God abiding.
Ever and always and yet, here and now.

Then on that Holy Thursday he knelt again to wash
their feet. But not theirs only... Jesus knelt to
wash our feet in living water. Baptizing us, even in
our sin-stained brokenness, with healing love.
Forgiving our betrayals and all our denials -- asking
only for our hearts, our hands, our compassion, our
kindness -- only for our love. Calling us to be like
him.

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Now I get up every morning,
earlier than the villagers,
early as the man.
I, the strong, no longer stretch to survive:
I kneel down to restore the weak.

And I have found,
though some might mock me,
that even far from the seaside
there are starfish on every street.