

Slippery

On our third visit to Holy Comforter during vocational discernment, it rains. Everyone is running late, but as usual John is early. He sports a Zorro mask and hat. I am learning that John remembers everything, right down to the dates of his childhood immunizations. He reminds me that Guy Williams played Zorro in Disney's black-and-white television series and that Zorro unmasked was Don Diego.

Gabe is there. I have not previously met this young man. He has come hoping to see his girlfriend, Janie. From his pocket, he produces a well-worn Crayola box stuffed with dark purple tissue paper. He pulls the paper out to reveal a small golden ring with a light green stone, which he plans to give Janie. Soon I see him dip to one knee before Janie. Later she reveals that they have become engaged.

Barry, as usual, raises his arms as Father Mark blesses the bread and wine. James dances in the aisle as we sing.

A young woman, who the week before told me that her former husband had once humiliated her by forcing her into a public exorcism, is not there. She is in the hospital, having suffered a momentary defeat in her fight for a stable relationship with reality.

As we sing, I lose my grip on the pitch. The slipperiness of the pitch discomforts me.

As I struggle, I look around and sense that many around me struggle for a stable hold on reality, if only for a few precious moments. My distress at the slipperiness of the pitch suddenly seems a metaphor of what they experience. I wonder whether their grasp on reality feels as slippery as my grasp on the pitch.

I keep singing. They keep getting out of bed. They keep coming to the altar to take in their hands the reality of the body and blood of the Lord. I marvel before their faithfulness.

Mike Tanner