

The Liturgy of Maundy Thursday

The Greeting

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. **Amen**

Prayers of Penitence

Our Lord Jesus Christ says: 'If you love me, keep my commandments.' 'Unless I wash you, you have no part in me.' Let us confess to almighty God our sins against his love and ask him to cleanse us.

Have mercy on us, O God, in your great goodness; according to the abundance of your compassion blot out our offences.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Against you only have we sinned and done what is evil in your sight.

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Purge us from our sin and we shall be clean; wash us and we shall be whiter than snow.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

May the Father forgive us by the death of his Son and strengthen us to live in the power of the Spirit all our days. **Amen.**

Let us pray that we may love one another as Christ has loved us.

Silence is kept.

The Collect

God our Father, your Son Jesus Christ was obedient to the end and drank the cup prepared for Him; may we who share this table watch with Him through the night of suffering and be faithful. **Amen**

Readings

Old Testament: Exodus 12. 1-4.

The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron in Egypt: "This month is to be the first month of the year for you. Give these instructions to the whole community of Israel: On the tenth day of this month each man must choose either a lamb or a young goat for his household. If his family is too small to eat a whole animal, he and his next-door neighbour may share an animal, in proportion to the number of people and the amount that each person can eat.

New Testament: 1 Corinthians 11. 23-26.

For I received from the Lord the teaching that I passed on to you: that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took a piece of bread, gave thanks to God, broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in memory of me." In the same way, after the supper he took the cup and said, "This cup is God's new covenant, sealed with my blood. Whenever you drink it, do so in memory of me." This means that every time you eat this bread and drink from this cup you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Gospel Reading

Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory. I give you a new commandment, says the Lord: Love one another as I have loved you.

Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John 13 1-17, 31b-35.

Glory to you, O Lord.

It was now the day before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. He had always loved those in the world who were his own, and he loved them to the very end. Jesus and his disciples were at supper. The Devil had already put into the heart of Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, the thought of betraying Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had given him complete power; he knew that he had come from God and was going to God. So, he rose from the table, took off his outer garment, and tied a towel around his waist. Then he poured some water into a washbasin and began to wash the disciples' feet and dry them with the towel around his waist. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Are you going to wash my feet, Lord?" Jesus answered him, "You do not understand now what I am doing, but you will understand later." Peter declared, "Never at any time will you wash my feet!" "If I do not wash your feet," Jesus answered, "you will no longer be my disciple." Simon Peter answered, "Lord, do not wash only my feet, then! Wash my hands and head, too!" Jesus said, "Those who have taken a bath are completely clean and do not have to wash themselves, except for their feet. All of you are clean - all except one. (Jesus already knew who was going to betray him; that is why he said, "All of you, except one, are clean.") After Jesus had washed their feet, he put his outer garment back on and returned to his place at the table. "Do you understand what I have just done to you?" he asked. "You call me Teacher and Lord, and it is right that you do so, because that is what I am. I, your Lord and Teacher, have just washed your feet. You, then, should wash one another's feet. I have set an example for you, so that you will do just what I have done for you. I am telling you the truth: no slaves are greater than their master, and no messengers are greater than the one who sent them. Now that you know this truth, how happy you will be if you put it into practice! After Judas had left, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man's glory is revealed; now God's glory is revealed through him. And if God's glory is revealed through him, then God will reveal the glory of the Son of Man in himself, and he will do so at once. My children, I shall not be with you very much longer. You will look for me; but I tell you now what I told the Jewish authorities, "You cannot go where I am going.' And now I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. If you have love for one another, then everyone will know that you are my disciples."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon (By Ian Bradly, Reader)

“May the thoughts of all our hearts tonight be acceptable to you O Lord our strength and redeemer”

Peter found that dictating to God did not work: it merely called forth an irrefutable argument with an ‘unless’ which was no choice at all. Jesus ostensibly left freedom of will with Peter but made the alternative so unpalatable as to be unconsidered.

When God comes to us with a strange or unwelcome suggestion, on the spur of the moment it is easy to react like Peter. Lord, you can't do this! It will dent your reputation! You cannot stoop so low! What we really mean is, that it may do nothing for our own image, that beautiful portrait, so carefully maintained and titivated, that we like the world to see.

God is not bothered about his own reputation. It has stood the test of time, preceded time, and will outlast time by a very fair margin. And even if our reputation was immaculate (which it is not), the world would find something to criticize in it.

Later that same night, after he had denied his Lord, Peter would recollect the foot-washing. What had it achieved? Why need he have gone through with it? Had it been a ghastly charade? Judas' feet had been washed (according to John's chronology), yet he had gone ahead with the betrayal!

Love is so vulnerable. God can, and does, go to great lengths to show us the extent of his love; he accepts us in the sacraments of the Church, yet all this does not stop us from sinning, if we are so inclined. He gives us his word, his armour, yet we can forget the word, and ignore the armour. It is the height of folly, but we can do it and often we manage to do it without even trying. In our vulnerability, we often fail

to hear our Lord's words: 'unless . . . you have no share with me.' But as soon as we do resume contact, the truth is there: we are sharing once more in the life, love and witness of Jesus sharing the promises of the Son of God, the joy of his strength, the strength of his purpose.

The drama and pathos of Maundy Thursday home in on our vulnerability, the rising and falling we experience every day of our Christian walk. Does God really mean life to be so difficult so seemingly random at times? We can pursue these questions until our despair is akin to that of Peter and the others in the Passion - until we remember that we are not expected to find reason and logic and common sense in everything God does. We are not permitted to see life's tapestry from the front, until the last stitch has gone in.

'It will come out all right in the end!' is not the facile assumption it may seem. If we believe, and keep on believing, that God is in charge, and that he is wanting us to make good and that, given time, we shall realize our spiritual potential then, yes, God has undertaken that we shall have a share with Jesus, the Lord who has all authority in heaven and earth.

Jesus has prepared everything, but we can still miss the point of his invitation. It is not a welcome to sheer enjoyment, as the world understands this but a challenge to take the nourishment, strength and cleansing he offers, to others. He infills us, so that through him we can fill others. So long as we'll do our part, he will see that we lack for nothing. He will provide the means and the measures.

It is not quantifiable logic, reason or common sense. It defies the world's ways of operating. It will also outlive the world so we cannot lose, if we stick with Jesus.

Prayers of intercession

- In the power of the Spirit let us pray to the Father through Christ the saviour of the world. Father, on this, the night he was betrayed, your

Son Jesus Christ washed his disciples' feet. We commit ourselves to follow his example of love and service.

Lord, hear us and humble us.

On this night, he prayed for his disciples to be one. We pray for the unity of your Church. Lord, hear us and unite us. On this night, he prayed for those who were to believe through his disciples' message. We pray for the mission of your Church.

Lord, hear us and renew our zeal.

On this night, he commanded his disciples to love, but suffered rejection himself. We pray for the rejected and unloved.

Lord, hear us and fill us with your love.

On this night, he reminded his disciples that if the world hated them it hated him first. We pray for those who are persecuted for their faith.

Lord, hear us and give us your peace.

On this night, he accepted the cup of death and looked forward to the new wine of the kingdom. We remember those who have died in the peace of Christ.

Lord, hear us and welcome all your children into paradise.

The Peace

Jesus says: 'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.'

The peace of the Lord be always with you.
and also with you.

The Lord's Prayer

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who

trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Jesus, Lamb of God, have mercy on us.

Jesus, bearer of our sins, have mercy on us.

Jesus, redeemer of the world, grant us your peace.

Psalm 88.

Lord God, my saviour, I cry out all day, and at night I come before you.

Hear my prayer; listen to my cry for help!

So many troubles have fallen on me that I am close to death.

I am like all others who are about to die; all my strength is gone.

I am abandoned among the dead; I am like the slain lying in their graves, those you have forgotten completely, who are beyond your help.

You have thrown me into the depths of the tomb, into the darkest and deepest pit.

Your anger lies heavy on me, and I am crushed beneath its waves.

You have caused my friends to abandon me; you have made me repulsive to them. I am closed in and cannot escape;

my eyes are weak from suffering. Lord, every day I call to you and lift my hands to you in prayer.

Do you perform miracles for the dead? Do they rise up and praise you?

Is your constant love spoken of in the grave or your faithfulness in the place of destruction?

Are your miracles seen in that place of darkness or your goodness in the land of the forgotten?

Lord, I call to you for help; every morning I pray to you.

Why do you reject me, Lord? Why do you turn away from me?

Ever since I was young, I have suffered and been near death; I am worn out from the burden of your punishments.

Your furious anger crushes me; your terrible attacks destroy me.

All day long they surround me like a flood; they close in on me from every side.

You have made even my closest friends abandon me, and darkness is my only companion.

Concluding Prayer

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is their faithfulness. 'The Lord is my portion,' says my soul, 'therefore I will hope in him.' The Lord is good to those who wait for him and to the soul that seeks him.

Amen