

all that we have and all that we are,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Common Worship · Additional Collects

Lectionary-based Catechesis • Year B

Maundy Thursday

Principal Service readings

Exodus 12.1–4 [5–10], 11–14 Instructions for the Passover
Psalm 116.1, 10–17 [or 116.9–17] Thanksgiving for God's blessings
1 Corinthians 11.23–26 Institution of the Lord's Supper
John 13.1–17, 31b–35 The Last Supper

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
speak to our hearts in the stillness,
keep us steadfast in the foundation that cannot be shaken,
lift up our eyes to behold the vision of your glory;
and perfect our faith, now and always. Amen.

Society of Saint Francis

Gospel Reading

Jesus' last meal with his disciples

¹Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. ²The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper ³Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, ⁴got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. ⁵Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. ⁶He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?' ⁷Jesus answered, 'You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.' ⁸Peter said to him, 'You will never wash my feet.' Jesus answered, 'Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.' ⁹Simon Peter said to him, 'Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!' ¹⁰Jesus said to him, 'One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you.' ¹¹For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, 'Not all of you are clean.'

¹²After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you?' ¹³You call me Teacher and Lord - and you are right, for that is what I am. ¹⁴So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

¹⁵For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.
¹⁶Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. ¹⁷If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. ¹⁸Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. ¹⁹If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. ²⁰Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, "Where I am going, you cannot come." ²¹I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. ²²By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.'

John 13.1-17,31b-35 NRSV¹

Comments and Questions

John doesn't give us a Passover meal, for he writes: 'Before the festival of the Passover ...'. The other gospels however, tell us that the Last Supper was a Passover meal. John shows us Jesus washing the disciples' feet, but why is there no institution of the Last Supper? We can see that Judas is intent on undermining the project, and Peter is characteristically recalcitrant. Jesus continues with the foot-washing, washing even Judas' and Peter's feet. Jesus gives an outward sign of indiscriminate service, telling his disciples to do the same. Service is an essential part of Christian identity – what we do for others. Jesus says explicitly: 'By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another'. Love is intangible but we can make it visible by what we do.

Quotations

1

When you look at the Crucifix, you understand how much Jesus loved you then. When you look at the Sacred Host you understand how much Jesus loves you now.

Mother Teresa (St Teresa of Calcutta), 1910–1997

2

What is meant by the 'eucharistic life'? It doesn't mean going to church every five minutes, and it doesn't mean walling oneself in with Christian

¹ New Revised Standard Version Bible is copyright © 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

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thoughts and Christian friends, important though these are. Rather, it means reproducing in everyday life the pattern of the Eucharist, which is the pattern of Christ: living a life to which penitence and forgiveness are integral; open to the glory of God in even the most unexpected settings; listening for his Word in whatever is said, and in the spaces between; testing one's belief against the belief and unbelief of the world; offering oneself for others, and others to God; entering into the darkness, brokenness and bloodiness of things in the nakedness of unprotected faith; and enjoying to the full our communion, our community with people of every possible kind, and with the whole created order. We pray God to make us a living sacrifice, but by itself that's too narrow and negative: we must become, in fact, a living sacrament, giving with love and receiving with thanks.

Bread of the world / John Hadley. 1989

Related topics

For further study:

Eucharist, foot-washing, covenant, paschal mystery, Triduum, charity, service

Closing Prayers

Almighty God,
who disclosed the secret of precedence in your kingdom,
when hands that had fashioned the earth washed the disciples' feet:
put away from us all pride of place and possession,
that, serving our brethren in season and out of season,
we may be found worthy of that part in your Son
which can never be taken away:
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God world without end.

A procession of passion prayers / Eric Milner-White. 1951

Eternal God,
in the cross of Jesus
we see the cost of our sin and the depth of your love:
in humble hope and fear may we place at your feet

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