

Maundy Thursday

Foot Washing Service for Home

Set out a bowl of water and a clean towel. Sit with them before you and begin with this prayer together or just one leader:

Holy God, source of all love,
on the night of his betrayal,
Jesus gave us a new commandment,
to love one another as he loves us.
Write this commandment in our hearts,
and give us the will to serve others as he was servant of all,
your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Then read this reading:

A Reading from the Book of Exodus (12:1–14)

The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: ²This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. ³Tell the whole congregation of Israel that on the tenth of this month they are to take a lamb for each family, a lamb for each household. ⁴If a household is too small for a whole lamb, it shall join its closest neighbor in obtaining one; the lamb shall be divided in proportion to the number of people who eat of it. ⁵Your lamb shall be without blemish, a year-old male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. ⁶You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembled congregation of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight. ⁷They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. ⁸They shall eat the lamb that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. ⁹Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted over the fire, with its head, legs, and inner organs. ¹⁰You shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. ¹¹This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly. It is the passover of the LORD. ¹²For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both human beings and animals; on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD. ¹³The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live: when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

¹⁴This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Then read the Gospel:

GOSPEL: John 13:1–17, 31b–35

Now 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. ^{31b}"Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. ³²If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. ³³Little 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.' ³⁴I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. ³⁵By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Having read these readings, think of this:

The point of Passover and the Last Supper with foot washing is not just to remember some important events in the past. And we certainly don't do these practices so we can return to some idealized historical moment. The reason we enact this ritual of foot washing is so that Christ, the Word of God, may continually be proclaimed again and again in our present time. It is a proclamation through our bodies rather than through our words. It is a proclamation of God's infinite love for us which cannot be stopped by anything, even death. God's love is so infinite and deep that God chooses to be in solidarity with us, even in our darkest and most difficult moments. God's love is such an amazing gift that even when we act in ways that

violate that love, God is still loving us. Jesus washes even Judas' feet, Judas the betrayer. As we prepare for the pain of Good Friday, may you receive and know this infinite, radical, unabashed, gracious love not only in your mind but in your whole body. – Rev. Alex Leach

Here you may wash one another's feet, using the water in the bowl, recalling Jesus washing his disciples' feet. If you would like some suitable words to say during this time, you may say the following after each person's feet are washed:

I give you a new commandment: Love one another as I have loved you.

After everyone's feet have been washed, say this concluding prayer together:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.

(A Prayer attributed to St. Francis, BCP p .833)

Optional: Preparing our homes for Good Friday

It is traditionally a part of our Maundy Thursday celebrations at church to end with removing everything from the altar. This is to symbolize our entry into the pain and loss that is Good Friday. We are saying goodbye to the joy at the Last Supper and preparing ourselves for the starkness of the cross.

If you would like to participate in this ritual, here are some instructions on how you could enact this in your own home.

- *If you have set up a home altar, take away all the religious art, icons, and objects. Take off any fabric you've laid down. If you can, wash it. You may leave one simple cross on the altar space if you wish.*
(And remember to put everything back on Saturday night/Sunday Morning!)
- Take down/cover/hide any religious symbols/art you have on the walls. If you want to really notice a difference on Friday, wrap any religious art/symbols on your wall in dark black fabric. Take down any religious symbols/imagery throughout your house
(Again, remember to put them back Saturday night/Sunday Morning!)
- Alternatively, if you do not have a home altar or religious imagery/art on your walls...you could find a cross and place it in a prominent place in whatever room you spend most of your time. If you do not have a cross in your home, you could always make a cross using sticks from outside and some string.