

MAUNDY THURSDAY DEVOTIONAL AND FELLOWSHIP MEAL

The early Christians used to regularly share meals together. In Acts 2 vs 46 and 47 we read: "Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people."

The current coronavirus crisis prevents us from gathering in our church communities as we normally would to mark the events of Holy Week. However, it does not stop us praying in our homes, giving thanks, and preparing spiritually for the great celebration of Easter.

Tonight's devotional takes place in the context of a meal shared 'virtually' at a distance between households.

A candle is lit.

The Gathering of God's People

Greeting

The Lord be with you
and also with you.

God of our days and years, we set this time apart for you.
Form us in the likeness of Christ so that our lives may glorify you. Amen.

Tonight we recall Jesus' final meal with his disciples before his arrest and crucifixion. As we do this, we also recall and honour the roots of our Christian faith in the history of the people of Israel. Jesus gathered with his friends to celebrate the Passover, the festival which marked the deliverance of God's people from slavery in Egypt.

The Collect for Purity

Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden;
Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Penitence

Lord God,
you sent your Son to reconcile us to yourself and to one another.

Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus,
you heal the wounds of sin and division.

Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

Holy Spirit,
through you we put to death the sins of the body - and live.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

The Collect of the Day

Almighty God,
at the Last Supper your Son Jesus Christ
washed the disciples' feet
and commanded them to love one another.
Give us humility and obedience to be servants of others
as he was the servant of all;
who gave up his life and died for us,
yet is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Hymn: CH525 *"Let there be love shared among us" (sung twice)*

Let there be love shared among us,
let there be love in our eyes,
may now your love sweep this nation,
cause us, O Lord, to arise;
give us a fresh understanding
of brotherly love that is real,
let there be love shared among us,
let there be love.

David Mowbray (b. 1938)

Listening to God's Word

Exodus 12:1-14, 17, *The story of the first Passover*

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. Tell 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. If a household is too small for a whole lamb, it shall join its closest neighbour in obtaining one; the lamb shall be divided in proportion to the number of people who eat of it. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a year-old male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembled congregation of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight. They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. They shall eat the lamb that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted over the fire, with its head, legs, and inner organs.

You shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. This 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. For 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 judgements: I am the Lord. The 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.

This 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... You shall observe the festival of unleavened bread, for on this very day I brought your companies out of the land of Egypt: you shall observe this day throughout your generations as a perpetual ordinance.

The Lord is my strength and my might, and he has become my salvation;

this is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him. (*Exodus 15:2*)

Exodus 14:13-20, *Crossing the Red Sea*

...Moses said to the people, 'Do not be afraid, stand firm, and see the deliverance that the Lord will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you see today you shall never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to keep still.'

Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Why do you cry out to me? Tell the Israelites to go forward. But you lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the Israelites may go into the sea on dry ground. Then I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them; and so I will gain glory for myself over Pharaoh and all his army, his chariots, and his chariot drivers. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gained glory for myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his chariot drivers.'

The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them. It came between the army of Egypt and the army of Israel. And so the cloud was there with the darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night.

The Lord is my strength and my might, and he has become my salvation;

this is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him. (*Exodus 15:2*)

Bible Responsory, *Deuteronomy 6:4-9*

Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. Hear, O Israel:

The Lord is our God, the Lord alone.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.

Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone.

Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart.

Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone.

Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone.

At the time of Jesus' baptism, his cousin John, a prophet, declared Jesus to be the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). Jesus' identity as the 'Lamb of God' takes on a special meaning in the context of the Passover festival. Even as they gather to celebrate the festival, Jesus is aware that the time has come to complete his work of sacrifice and salvation.

Matthew 26:17-19, 26-29, *Jesus and his Disciples Celebrate the Passover Meal*

On the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, 'Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?' He said, 'Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, "The Teacher says, My time is near; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples." ' So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover meal...

While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.' Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.'



Worthy is the Lamb,

to receive honour and glory and blessing. (*cf Revelation 5:12*)

John 13:1-17, *Jesus washes the disciples' feet*

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. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all

things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then 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. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?' Jesus answered, 'You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.' Peter said to him, 'You will never wash my feet.' Jesus answered, 'Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.' Simon Peter said to him, 'Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!' Jesus 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.' For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, 'Not all of you are clean.'

After 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? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.'

Worthy is the Lamb,
to receive honour and glory and blessing. (cf Revelation 5:12)

Hymn: CH530 “*Ubi caritas et amor*” (vs 1,3 and 6)

¹*Ubi caritas et amor,
Ubi caritas Deus ibi est.*

Your love, O Jesus Christ, has gathered us together.

Let us love one another as God has loved us.

The love of Jesus Christ will never have an end.

Taizé Community

Reflection

Affirmation of Faith

We have listened again this night to the story of God's love for his people and his gift to us in Christ Jesus, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, and so we re-affirm our faith:

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, who made the world?

I believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in his Son Jesus Christ, who redeemed mankind?

I believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in the Holy Spirit who gives life to the people of God?

I believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

This is our faith.

**We believe and trust in One God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

¹ Translation: Where charity (i.e., 'loving-kindness') and love are found, God himself is there.

Prayers

Loving Father, we give you thanks, for you are our rescuer.

Blessed be God for ever.

We give thanks for the gift of Christ, whose body was given for us and whose blood was shed for us.

Blessed be God for ever.

We give thanks that we may know the empowering presence of the Spirit this night and always.

Blessed be God for ever.

We give thanks for the example of Christ as servant and who leads us in the way of servanthood.

Blessed be God for ever.

In silence or aloud we offer prayers for the needs of the world, for our community and our loved ones...

The Lord's Prayer

Gathering our prayers and praises into one, we are bold to pray:

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. Amen.

For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

God of compassion,

through your Son Jesus Christ

you have reconciled your people to yourself.

As we follow his example, may we obey you with willing hearts and serve

one another in holy love,

through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Fellowship Meal

Hymn: CH428 *"Let us break bread together"*

Let us break bread together, we are one;

let us break bread together, we are one.

We are one as we stand

with our face to the rising Son,

O Lord, have mercy on me.

Let us drink wine together, we are one;

let us drink wine together, we are one.

Let us praise God together, we are one;
let us praise God together, we are one.

based on a North American traditional folk hymn

Grace

Generous God, we give you thanks for the gifts of food and fellowship we are about to share.

Blessed be God for ever. Amen.