

The Living Word

Holy Thursday – Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper

9 April 2020

First Reading Ex 12:1-8, 11-14

The law for the passover meal.

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, 'This month is to be the first of all the others for you, the first month of your year. Speak to the whole community of Israel and say, "On the tenth day of this month each man must take an animal from the flock, one for each family: one animal for each household. If the household is too small to eat the animal, a man must join with his neighbour, the nearest to his house, as the number of persons requires. You must take into account what each can eat in deciding the number for the animal. It must be an animal without blemish, a male one year old; you may take it from either sheep or goats. You must keep it till the fourteenth day of the month when the whole assembly of the community of Israel shall slaughter it between the two evenings. Some of the blood must then be taken and put on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses where it is eaten. That night, the flesh is to be eaten, roasted over the fire; it must be eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. You shall eat it like this: with a girdle round your waist, sandals on your feet, a staff in your hand. You shall eat it hastily; it is a passover in honour of the Lord. That night, I will go through the land of Egypt and strike down all the first-born in the land of Egypt, man and beast alike, and I shall deal out punishment to all the gods of Egypt, I am the Lord. The blood shall serve to mark the houses that you live in. When I see the blood I will pass over you and you shall escape the destroying plague when I strike the land of Egypt. This day is to be a day of remembrance for you, and you must celebrate it as a feast in the Lord's honour. For all generations you are to declare it a day of festival, for ever."

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 115:12-13. 15-18. R. cf. 1 Cor 10:16

(R.) Our blessing-cup is a communion with the blood of Christ.

1. How can I repay the Lord for his goodness to me?
The cup of salvation I will raise;
I will call on the Lord's name. (R.)
2. O precious in the eyes of the Lord is the death of his faithful.
Your servant, Lord, your servant am I;
you have loosened my bonds. (R.)
3. A thanksgiving sacrifice I make:
I will call on the Lord's name.
My vows to the Lord I will fulfil
before all his people. (R.)

Second Reading 1 Cor 11:23-26

Until the Lord comes, every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim his death.

This is what I received from the Lord, and in turn passed on to you: that on the same night that he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread, and thanked God for it and broke it, and he said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this as a memorial of me.' In the same way he took the cup after supper, and said, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Whenever you drink it, do this as a memorial of me.' Until the Lord comes, therefore, every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are proclaiming his death.

Gospel Acclamation Jn 13:34

*Praise and honour to you,
Lord Jesus Christ!*

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

*Praise and honour to you,
Lord Jesus Christ!*



Reflection by Dianne Bergant CSA

At the beginning of our meditation of the Passover, we see God passing over us as a protective angel, preserving us from harm, leading us out of bondage into freedom. Jesus then passes beyond being Lord and master and kneels before us as our humble servant. If we are to belong to him, we must allow him to wash our feet. In both of these instances, the saving action is God's. The initiative is God's; the magnanimity is God's; the self-emptying is God's. We have nothing to contribute to these amazing happenings. All we have to do is accept the salvation that is offered. On this day of Eucharist, our only response is a sacrifice of thanksgiving, a sacrifice that is really our openness to receive the sacrifice of God – the sacrifice of the lamb and the sacrifice of Jesus' self-emptying service.

Who could have imagined that any of this would happen? A motley group of runaway labourers escapes from the clutches of their superpower overlords; bread and wine is changed into the body and blood of a man who is being hunted down; the Son who was sent by God into the world washes the feet of his disciples. It is no wonder that Peter initially resisted. God's love for us is beyond comprehension. This night we are left with the directive: 'As I have done, so you must do.' Our thanksgiving is expressed in our own self-emptying service of others. Having received the gifts of God, we give them away; they flow from God through us to others.

Gospel Jn 13:1-15

To the end he showed his love for them.

It was before the festival of the Passover, and Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to pass from this world to the Father. He had always loved those who were his in the world, but now he showed how perfect his love was.

They were at supper, and the devil had already put it into the mind of Judas Iscariot son of Simon, to betray him. Jesus knew that the Father had put everything into his hands, and that he had come from God and was returning to God, and he got up from table, removed his outer garment and, taking a towel, wrapped it round his waist; he then poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel he was wearing.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?' Jesus answered, 'At the moment you do not know what I am doing, but later you will understand.' 'Never!' said Peter. 'You shall never wash my feet.' Jesus replied, 'If I do not wash you, you can have nothing in common with me.' 'Then, Lord,' said Simon Peter, 'not only my feet, but my hands and my head as well!' Jesus said, 'No one who has taken a bath needs washing, he is clean all over. You too are clean, though not all of you are.' He knew who was going to betray him, that was why he said, 'though not all of you are.'

When he had washed their feet and put on his clothes again he went back to the table. 'Do you understand' he said 'what I have done to you? You call me Master and Lord, and rightly; so I am. If I, then, the Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you should wash each other's feet. I have given you an example so that you may copy what I have done to you.'

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