

Reflection

On Maundy Thursday we celebrate that first occasion
when Our Lord took bread and changed it into his body, took wine and changed it into his blood.

That truth requires from us humility, which can only be his gift.

I mean that humility of mind whereby we acknowledge in truth
that what was once bread is now his body, what was once wine is now his blood.

That is why we genuflect to pay honour to him in the Blessed Sacrament.

Afterwards, when we pray at the altar of repose,

we know we are close to him in his suffering in the garden of Gethsemane,
as close to him as Mary Magdalen when she met him in the garden on that first Easter Sunday:
this is the astonishing fact.

So Maundy Thursday is when we renew our act of faith in that great truth,
and recognise that in the Mass, which Jesus institutes at the Last Supper,
we have the means given by him, to become involved in his passion, death and resurrection.

For every Mass is a celebration of Good Friday and Easter Sunday,
and Maundy Thursday was the day on which these two realities – his death and resurrection –
were made available to us through the Mass.

That great act which is both sacrifice and banquet is central to the life of the Church.

Cardinal Basil Hume, "A Great Celebration" in *The Mystery of the Cross*, 1998

Concluding Prayer

Almighty God,
we receive new life
from the supper your Son gave us in this world.
May we find full contentment
in the meal we hope to share
in your eternal kingdom.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Watch and Pray

Following the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper the Blessed Sacrament is usually carried through the church to the Altar of Repose; it is traditional to keep watch there for a period of time.

In the Christ of Gethsemane, struggling and filled with anguish, we see ourselves reflected, whenever we pass through the night of searing pain, of separation from friends, of God's silence. In this sense, it has been said that Jesus "will be in agony until the end of the world: we cannot sleep until that moment, for he seeks companionship and comfort" (Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, no 553), like everyone else who suffers on this earth. In him too, we see our own face, when it is wet with tears and racked by distress.

But Jesus' struggle does not yield to the temptation of despair and surrender, but to a profession of confident trust in the Father and his mysterious plan. In that bitter hour it is the words of the "Our Father" that he holds out to us: "Pray that you may not enter into temptation ... Not my will, but yours be done!" And then an angel of consolation, strength and comfort appears, who helps Jesus, and us, to persevere to the end of the journey.

from *The Way of Sorrows*, written by **Monsignor Gianfranco Ravasi** (Prefect of the Ambrosian Library & Gallery of Milan) and prayed at the Colosseum by Pope Benedict XVI in 2006

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Prayers and Readings for Maundy Thursday

9 April 2020



*Due to the Coronavirus pandemic,
all public acts of worship
in Catholic churches throughout Britain
are suspended
and churches are locked until further notice.*

*We offer this leaflet
as an aid to personal prayer and reflection
it includes some of the readings and prayers
from today's liturgy.*

(for use at home)

*"We should glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,
for he is our salvation, our life and our resurrection;
through him we are saved and made free"*

Entrance Antiphon, Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper

*With these words we open the Sacred Triduum;
they usher in, and set the scene for, the annual re-presentation of the paschal mystery:
the Church's celebration of the death and resurrection of the Lord.
Lent comes quietly to its end as the sun sets on Maundy Thursday.
This year we cannot gather to celebrate the three day paschal feast;
but we are united spiritually as we keep these holy days in our homes.*

Sign of the Cross

+ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Opening Prayer

Lord our God,
teach us to cherish in our hearts
the paschal mystery of your Son
by which you redeemed the world.
Watch over the gifts of grace your love has given us
and bring them to fulfilment in the glory of heaven.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

First Reading

A reading from the book of Exodus

Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14

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 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 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.'"

Psalm

10:16

Ps 115: 12-13, 15-18 R/. cf 1 Cor

The blessing-cup that we bless is a communion with the blood of Christ.

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.

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.

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.

Second Reading

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians

I Cor 11:23-26

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 Reading

Jn 13:1-15

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

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.'

Washing of Feet

Jesus, come, my feet are dirty.

You have become a servant for my sake,

so fill your basin with water; come, wash my feet.

I know that I am bold in saying this, but your own words have made me fearful:

'If I do not wash your feet, you will have no companionship with me.'

Wash my feet, then, so that I may be your companion.

But what am I saying: 'Wash my feet'?

Peter could say these words, for all that needed washing were his feet.

For the rest, he was completely clean.

I must be made clean with that other washing of which you said:

'I have a baptism with which I must be baptised.'

Origen, from *A Homily on Isaiah 5:2* (third century)

Spiritual Communion

We now make an act of Spiritual Communion using words written by St Alphonsus Ligouri.

My Jesus,

I believe that you are present in the Holy Sacrament of the altar.

I love you above all things

and I passionately desire to receive you into my soul.

Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,

come spiritually into my soul

so that I may unite myself wholly to you now and for ever.

Amen.