

Reading for Thursday of Holy Week Maundy Thursday

The Mass of the Lord's Supper

April 2nd 2026

First reading

Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14

Ordinances for the Passover meal.

In those days: The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, 'This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you. Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household. And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbour shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male, a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight.

'Then 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 flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it.

'In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord's Passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and 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 are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.

'This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations, as a statute for ever, you shall keep it as a feast.'

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 116(115):12-13, 15, 16bc, 17-18. R cf. 1 Corinthians 10:16

The cup of blessing is a communion in the blood of Christ.

How can I repay the Lord for all his goodness to me?

The cup of salvation I will raise;

I will call on the name of the Lord.

How precious in the eyes of the Lord is the death of his faithful.

Your servant am I, the son of your handmaid;

you have loosened my bonds.

I will offer a thanksgiving sacrifice;

I will call on the name of the Lord.

My vows to the Lord I will fulfil before all his people.

Second reading

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

'For as often as you eat and drink, you proclaim the Lord's death.'

Brothers and Sisters: I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you; that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, 'This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Gospel Acclamation

John 13:34

Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.
A new commandment I give to you, says the Lord,
that you love one another, just as I have loved you.
Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.

Gospel

John 13:1-15

He loved them to the end.

Before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it round his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped round him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, do you wash my feet?' Jesus answered him, 'What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterwards you will understand.' Peter said to him, 'You shall never wash my feet.' Jesus answered him, 'If I do not 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, 'The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you.' For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, 'Not all of you are clean.'

When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, 'Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.'

Short reflection on the reading for today

When Jesus says, "Do this in memory of me!" what exactly did he mean by "THIS" What had Jesus in mind through the symbolism of the broken bread and the shared wine? We need to get behind the standard Catechism answer that the Mass is a time-transcending sacrifice and think afresh about what the paschal meal meant. The Last Supper was celebrated in the context of the Jewish Passover meal and tonight's first reading explains the meaning of this feast. In words and symbols it recalled the greatest saving act of God in the Old Testament, the exodus from Egypt, setting God's people free from slavery. It opens us up to the idea that God enters our lives to save us and set us free from whatever oppresses us. So "opened up," we are prepared for the good news that the definitive saving work of God is done in and by Jesus Christ.

This was the supreme "hour" of Jesus, the high point of his saving work, the new exodus, leaving this world to go back to the Father. This exodus of Jesus created a new relationship between God and humanity. Sharing in this new exodus is our liberation from slavery to material things and petty self-interest to let us love generously, in the image of God. Through love-without-limit, in his utter self-giving Jesus overcame all human selfishness and draws us away from sin. This tremendous love, which the Father wants us all to share, animates the passion of Christ. It is this self-giving love that he wants to keep alive among us. With his disciples in the Last Supper he anticipated his sacrifice on the cross, giving himself under the symbols of bread and wine. Every celebration of our Eucharist is the living memorial that unites us with his saving sacrifice. By it we share in the new exodus, so that we become truly human as God wants us to be.

Like St Peter, we cooperate with Jesus by letting him wash our feet, accepting his loving service. Having accepted the gift we try to imitate it in our lives. What Jesus does for us in his Passion shows us how to live. In some real sense, we must live "for" God and for others. He tells them "you also ought to wash one another's feet." We can regard our Eucharist as the place where the Lord washes our feet, and then sends us out to wash the feet of others, figuratively at least. Genuine Eucharist piety must lead to service of

others. The same Christ who broke the bread of the Eucharist also washed the feet of his followers. We must follow his example both at the altar of the Eucharist and at the altar of life.