

# An Order of Service for Maundy Thursday

9<sup>th</sup> April 2020



Maundy Thursday marks a new beginning, the beginning of the end. From this point on our Christian worship is a continuum through to Easter morning.

Today we were due to be sharing a meal together in our joint service for Maundy Thursday evening. Instead we find ourselves in our separate homes, socially distancing ourselves from our brothers and sisters and neighbours, in order to keep each other safe and well. This, I believe, is an apt call as tonight, although we are unable to physically be and share together, we can meet together virtually as we recall Jesus sitting down with his disciples at The Last Supper and his washing of their feet.

Let us, then set out to share together in this service, remembering His commandment:

Jesus says "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

John 13: 34-35

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you  
**and also with you.**

## Prayers of penitence

Our Lord Jesus Christ says: 'If you love me, keep my commandments.'

John 14:15

'Unless I wash you, you have no part in me.'

John 13:8

'Let us confess to almighty God our sins against his love and ask him to cleanse us.

*Silence is kept.*

Have mercy on us, O God,  
in your great goodness;  
according to the abundance of your compassion  
blot out our offences.

Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy**

Against you only have we sinned and done what is evil in your sight.

Christ, have mercy.

**Christ, have mercy.**

Purge us from our sin and we shall be clean; wash us and we shall be whiter than snow.  
Lord, have mercy.

**Lord have mercy.**

May the Father forgive us by the death of his Son and strengthen us to live in the power of the Spirit  
all our days.

**Amen.**

### **The Collect**

Let us pray that we may love one another as Christ has loved us.

*Silence is kept.*

God our Father,  
your Son Jesus Christ was obedient to the end and drank the cup prepared for him:  
may we who share his table watch with him through the night of suffering and be faithful.

**Amen.**

### **Reading:**

**John 13:1-17, 31-35**

#### Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet

13 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. <sup>2</sup>The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper <sup>3</sup>Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, <sup>4</sup>got up from the table, <sup>[a]</sup>took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. <sup>5</sup>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. <sup>6</sup>He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?' <sup>7</sup>Jesus answered, 'You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.' <sup>8</sup>Peter said to him, 'You will never wash my feet.' Jesus answered, 'Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.' <sup>9</sup>Simon Peter said to him, 'Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!' <sup>10</sup>Jesus said to him, 'One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, <sup>[b]</sup>but is entirely clean. And you <sup>[c]</sup>are clean, though not all of you.' <sup>11</sup>For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, 'Not all of you are clean.'  
<sup>12</sup>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?' <sup>13</sup>You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. <sup>14</sup>So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. <sup>15</sup>For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. <sup>16</sup>Very truly, I tell you, servants <sup>[d]</sup>are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. <sup>17</sup>If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. //

#### The New Commandment

<sup>31</sup>When he had gone out, Jesus said, 'Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. <sup>32</sup>If God has been glorified in him, <sup>[i]</sup>God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. <sup>33</sup>Little 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." <sup>34</sup>I give you a new

commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. <sup>35</sup>By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.'

This is the Gospel of Christ.

**Praise to Christ Our Lord.**

### **Sermon**

As a hospital chaplain, part of my role is to work with people in the community who are living with long-term health conditions which tend to keep them socially isolated. For some folk, we need to remember that social isolation can feel pretty normal. However, my role is to encourage people to gather together to share their experiences of what it is like living with such health conditions and to enable them to learn from each other. For many, these groups turn out to be important ongoing life-lines as they establish new relationships with one another and look forward to coming out of their homes to meet and spend time with each other on a weekly basis. Sadly, now I am spending a great deal of my time, phoning all my group members regularly to ensure they are adhering to the letters they've received telling them to socially isolate themselves from the outside world for a twelve week period in order to protect them from getting this dreadful virus, as they are all vulnerable. Whether we are in a lock-down situation or not, I believe my role is always to ensure that these people who I have grown to love and care for are supported in whatever is life-giving, physically or emotionally, for them.

During this unprecedented time, I am sad too that as Christians we are massively impacted on how we traditionally commemorate Holy Week, a time when ordinarily Christians spend a great deal of time together, remembering Jesus' journey to the cross for our salvation and celebrating Easter Day, the greatest day in history, in worship and praise of what he has done for humankind – effectively what is lifegiving for every Christian.

Our Bible passage tells us in verses 14 to 17 that Jesus' mission to the cross included his example of servanthood for humankind. In his washing of the disciples' feet he takes on the role of the lowliest servant in any household who would wash the feet of the household before they reclined on the floor for a meal on a low-down table, in order to remove the road's dirt, including animal waste, which everyone would have to trek through in sandals whenever they went outside. But more than that, Jesus then tells his disciples "you also ought to wash one another's feet.....you should do as I have done to you..... blessed are you if you do them.

*<sup>14</sup> "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. <sup>15</sup> For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.*

*<sup>16</sup> Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. <sup>17</sup> If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them."*

*John 13:14-17*

How then, can we follow Jesus' example and calling to his followers?

I'd like to suggest that many of you are doing this during this life-threatening crisis; You are phoning the housebound and doing their shopping, you are supporting the Foodbank and praying regularly for keyworkers. Most of all, for those who are following the government's instructions to stay at home and only go out for occasional and exceptional circumstances, i.e. shopping and one times daily exercise whilst maintaining social distancing, then I truly believe that you are indeed loving one another because you have love and concern for the life of our fellow human beings. All these things are brilliant but to distinguish ourselves as Christians responding to this crisis, we must by our actions, say that Jesus is at the heart of all that we do. In our declaring our following of Jesus first

and foremost, then others will know that we are God's children, and not just striving on our own to simply be good and conscientious human beings.

When we, sisters and brothers, are able to gather back together once again, I believe we will be changed. I pray that as a nation, we will be changed into a people that cares for and appreciates relationships with one another more, but as followers of Jesus we will truly give God the glory. For it is he that begins his journey to the cross by giving us the commandment to:

“love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

John 13: 34-35

Jesus is our great example. He showed us how we should live and he calls us now to love others as he loves us. For who are we to deserve his grace and mercy? Surely, when he loves us as he does, the least we can do, if we are true followers of him, is to get down and dirty, as Jesus did, with those he calls us to love and serve this day and every day. For it is whom we serve “in Christ,” that when they know us, will come to understand that Jesus is our Lord, because we believe in Jesus' power to rescue us from darkness and all that holds us there, and to bring us into his marvellous light.

As Christians, we are called to value humankind as created in God's image – to love and value everyone as God has loved us. We know that tonight Jesus is heading to the cross with love on his mind. Love for us all – so much that he will die for us, so that we, though none of us deserve it, can have abundant life in God, with and through Jesus Christ, whose call is that we love and care for one another as he loves us. We know the path that Jesus followed was unbelievably costly. We should know too that a life with Christ is costly for us too, but Jesus' ultimate gift of life with him is worth everything that it may cost us to be his followers.

I want to finish with a song – which you can follow on through the link below. The lyrics are also written below; words which are touching as you watch the video when today we are living in a time when community looks vastly different to what we have ever known before and the intimacy of touch with those we love and care for feels now as the lyrics describe:

“The space between ourselves sometimes is more than the distance between the stars”

Despite this, be assured of Jesus walk with us, as we begin this evening to journey with him through the darkness to the place of our salvation. Thanks be to God. Amen.

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=the+basin+and+the+towel+michael+card&ru=%2fsearch%3fq%3dthe%2bbasin%2band%2bthe%2btowel%2bmichael%2bcard%26form%3dEDNTHN%26mkt%3den-gb%26httpsmsn%3d1%26msnews%3d1%26plvar%3d0%26refig%3d1f7cfbb2e5fa49958e9b918784e4c9e4%26sp%3d4%26qs%3dBT%26pq%3dthebasin%2band%2bthe%2btowl%26sk%3dPRES1BT3%26sc%3d5-21%26cvid%3d1f7cfbb2e5fa49958e9b918784e4c9e4%26cc%3dGB%26setlang%3den-GB&view=detail&mid=18DA88BFDA5B35DEBEAB18DA88BFDA5B35DEBEAB&rvsmid=4F79B1AFC8C0576410434F79B1AFC8C057641043&FORM=VDRVRV>

**‘The Basin and the Towel’ by Michael Card**

In an upstairs room, a parable  
Is just about to come alive  
And while they bicker about who's best  
With a painful glance, He'll silently rise

Their Saviour Servant must show them how  
Through the will of the water  
And the tenderness of the towel

And the call is to community  
The impoverished power that sets the soul free  
In humility, to take the vow  
That day after day we must take up the basin and the towel

In any ordinary place  
On any ordinary day  
The parable can live again  
When one will kneel and one will yield

Our Saviour Servant must show us how  
Through the will of the water  
And the tenderness of the towel

The space between ourselves sometimes  
Is more than the distance between the stars  
By the fragile bridge of the Servant's bow  
We take up the basin and the towel  
And the call is to community  
The impoverished power that sets the soul free  
In humility, to take the vow  
That day after day we must take up the basin and the towel

### **Remembering**

As we remember Jesus washing the feet of his disciples, let us pray:

Almighty Father,  
Whose Son Jesus Christ taught us that we do for the least of our sisters and brothers, we do also for him; give us the will to be the servant 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 forever. **Amen.**

~

*God is love, and where true love is, God himself is there.*

James Quinn SJ

### **Prayers of Intercession**

In the power of the Spirit let us pray to the Father through Christ the saviour of the world.

Father, on this, the night he was betrayed,  
your Son Jesus Christ washed his disciples' feet.  
We commit ourselves to follow his example of love and service.  
Lord, hear us  
**and humble us.**

On this night, he prayed for his disciple to be one.  
We pray for the unity of your Church.  
Lord, hear us  
**and unite us.**

On this night, he prayed for those who were to believe through his disciples' message.

We pray for the mission of your Church.

Lord, hear us

**and renew our zeal.**

On this night, he commanded his disciples to love,  
but suffered rejection himself.

We pray for the rejected and unloved.

Lord, hear us

**and fill us with your love.**

On this night, he reminded his disciples  
that if the world hated them it hated him first.

We pray for those who are persecuted for their faith.

Lord, hear us

**and give us your peace.**

On this night, he accepted the cup of death  
and looked forward to the new wine of the kingdom.

We remember those who have died in the peace of Christ.

Lord, hear us

**and welcome all your children into paradise. Amen.**

When the disciples had sung a hymn they went out to the Mount of Olives. Jesus prayed to the Father, "If it is possible, take this cup of suffering from me."

He said to his disciples, "How is it that you were not able to keep watch with me for one hour? The hour had come for the Son of Man to be handed over to the power of sinful men. Come, let us go."

Chris was obedient unto death. God in his peace.

~

### **The Watch**

*The watch may be kept. If you would like to do so, the following readings may be used. Silences may follow the readings.*

John 13.16-30 and Psalm 113

John 13.31-end and Psalm 114

John 14.1-14 and Psalm 115

John 14.15-end and Psalm 116.1-9

John 15.1-17 and Psalm 116.10-end

John 15.18–16.4a and Psalm 117

John 16.4b-15 and Psalm 118.1-9

John 16.16-end and Psalm 118.10-18

John 17.1-19 and Psalm 118.19-end

John 17.20-end

*Then may follow Psalm 54 and the Gospel of the Watch, Luke 22.31-62, followed by silence.*