

MAUNDY THURSDAY

March 29 2018

Jeremiah 31:31-34

Hebrews 10:15-25

Luke 22:7-20

Standing...

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

[Today / Tonight], in the Holy Eucharist, Jesus gets as close to you as humanly possible. It's Eden here and now,
 until some day,
 your death will move you to Eden then and there.

Let us pray. These are Your words Holy Father. Sanctify us in the truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Sitting...

[Today / Tonight], Holy Week gives way to the Triduum—the three most sacred days of the Church Year.
 Maundy Thursday,
 Good Friday,
 and the Easter Vigil—the night of watching.

[Today / Tonight], we all know what is coming...
 Judas and the betrayal,
 Peter and the denial,
 Jesus and the Garden of Gethsemane,
 then the trials, along with the torture,
 followed by the crucifixion and the death of our Lord.

With all of that looming, Maundy Thursday can feel a bit grim.
 But just for this night, the flowers have returned
 before the resurrection of Easter morning.
 For you see, what started with ashes these forty days of reflection and
 repentance—is now white, white with joy.
 And you...you have been drawn here—to a holy spot—

to your church, to this altar,
which is nothing short of a miracle.

For you see, **[Today / Tonight]**, heaven comes to earth in the gracious,
forgiving presence of Jesus Christ, our Lord,
to do for you what He did for Nicodemus and the woman at the well;
to do for you what He did for the blind man at the pool of Silome,
and for dead Lazarus.

Where He tells you once again,
"You are mine and I am yours."
Closing the gap between you and Him.

Our Lord gives to us on this Maundy Thursday what He promised in Jeremiah and delivered up to us in the Gospel of St. Luke—a new covenant made in His very own blood.

[Today / Tonight], this High Priest draws us near and draws the curtain back
that we might see the mystery—of the Host becoming the meal and feeding us—
forgiving us.

This is **[the day, the night]** to be reconciled to our God and reconciled to each other.
Think of it as a fresh start for every one of us.

This is **[the day, the night]**
where Jesus refuses to be separated from any of you and He refuses to let us be
separated from each other. No matter what you've done to Him, Jesus insists on
loving you, and insists we love each other.

This is **[the day, the night]**
that makes us Church and teaches us to live in hope and love and good,
from now until He comes again, and it happens nowhere else.
This is why the Early Church rejoiced in the Eucharist—
calling it the medicine of immortality...
the antidote to death.

On that first Maundy Thursday, at the Eucharist, the disciples were
thankful, grateful and joyful.
But from the start, Jesus taught them that this was not a grace and joy and a
gratitude for them alone. They were not meant to keep it among themselves.

They saw it first in Jesus Himself,
 His tangible love,
 His humble service.

Jesus called His twelve disciples to share one last meal.
 And there, He takes a towel, and a basin of water and He washes them.
 It is His way of helping them understand Him, and understand themselves.
 It is His way of showing them who He is and who they are.
 It is His own way of making them His Church,
 a way of bestowing hope and showing love and prompting good.

As you know, Peter protests, "You will never wash my feet!"
 Jesus stands firm.
 "If you do not allow Me to do what I have been sent to do,
 then you have no part in Me."
 "Please" says St. Peter.
 "Thank you" says Jesus.
 And then He tells them,
 "I am Lord and I am Teacher,
 I am servant and I am example
 and I send you out to do these things as well."

No doubt, it was difficult for the disciples to have their master be their servant—
 for their King to be their slave.
 And it was even more difficult for them to carry out what He called them to do.
 This is true for us as well—in any time and in any place.
 This is a move from Eucharist to Eucharistia—
 a rejoicing in the gift He gives, Body and Blood, that propels you
 from this altar out into His world for the good of His Church.

Again, this move is not always easy.
 Yet it is why, says the writer to the Hebrews, that we ought not to neglect meeting
 together. For you see, meeting together for them always meant meeting for the
 Eucharist.

It is why says the writer of the Hebrews that we ought to stir each other up in hope and
 love and good works, which so often we find terribly difficult to do.

One day later the Body and Blood of that Supper
 will be hung on the cross for the forgiveness of the world.

Two days later that Body and Blood will rest in the tomb.
 Three days later that Body and Blood will rise from the dead
 for the re-creation of the world.

In just a moment, the curtain will be pulled back once again.
 and you will glimpse the mystery where we are mystically bound to Jesus
 and mysteriously united with those around us.

This is the miracle—
 the medicine of immortality—
 the antidote to death—
 the antivenom—in the most literal sense of the word
 “Everyone knew it would come,” said Jeremiah.
 “Here it is,” said Jesus Christ.

“Everybody believes,” says St. Paul, “that the cup of blessing which we bless is the blood of Christ and the bread which we break is His body.” “Everybody knows,” says the writer of Hebrews, “that only this Body and only this Blood draws us to the holy place and lets us live.” That only this Priest can wash us clean and only this Host can feed us, forgive us.

[Today / Tonight] when you approach, know that nothing is held back.

Not your sins and not your doubts.

All of it here, drawn to this holy spot, at this altar, and all of it forgiven,
 without conditions or cost.

It’s a joy to be with you here **[Today / Tonight]** with the white and the flowers—
 to have this gift given again.

And then to watch tomorrow...learning again why Friday is Good.
 And the next day as we wait with Jesus in silence and anticipation,
 and then the next day,
 as He resurrects to life and we live together,
 in hope
 and love
 and good.

In the Holy Name of Jesus, Amen.

Standing...

And now may the peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.