

# MAUNDY THURSDAY READINGS AND IMAGES TO REFLECT AT HOME

## *Introduction*

This has been a Holy Week to remember. We have been locked into our own homes and unable to do the usual Holy Week church thing, and today is no exception. Yet, today is Maundy Thursday, a day that starts of the Sacred Triduum, the three days forming the climax of our Passiontide journey, when we reflect on the last moments of Christ on earth. Usually it would be a time when we come together as a community in church – but as said, this year things are very different. On this Holy Maundy Thursday, I would like to offer you two readings from the Holy Eucharist service and some images and questions to reflect, originally produced to St Asaph Cathedral in Wales to be used during Holy Week 2020. - I hope they help each one of us to journey through these next three days, as we are to keep our eyes on Jesus, even though we find our journey less orderly than before.

Maundy Thursday blessings,  
Rev Maria

If you are using this resource on your screen, you should be able to access the clips of music simply by clicking on them:

John Stainer, God so loved the world (Choir of St Paul's Cathedral)

<https://safeyoutube.net/w/9lf5>

Ola Gjeilo, Ubi caritas et amor (Voices 8)

<https://safeyoutube.net/w/zKf5>

John Rutter, The Lord Bless you and Keep You (Cambridge Singers)

<https://safeyoutube.net/w/MKf5>

## PREPARATION

*Take a moment in quiet to acknowledge God's presence with you.*

*You could play John Stainer's, God so loved the world-*

<https://safeyoutube.net/w/9Jf5>

### **A reading from St Paul to the Corinthians 1 Cor. 11: 23–26**

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way he took the cup also, 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.

*You may like to spend some moments reflecting on this picture. Notice the face of Jesus reflected in the chalice; the shadow of the cross reflected on the white cloth; the broken bread in the centre, forming the Chi Rho symbol (the first letters of the name Christ, in Greek); the expressions on the faces of the disciples – almost all turned towards Jesus, even as Judas leaves the room. One of Jesus's hands is open in a gesture of self-offering. This is a moment of intense love and mystery, containing the desire of Jesus that we should remember him and know that his presence remains with us and within us.*

*What resonates with you here? Where are you in the picture?*



*Sieger Köder (1925–2015), Last Supper*

## **Gospel Reading - *John 13: 1-17, 31b-35***

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. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. 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. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?' Jesus answered, 'You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.' Peter said to him, 'You will never wash my feet.' Jesus answered, 'Unless I 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, 'One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you.' For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, 'Not all of you are clean.'

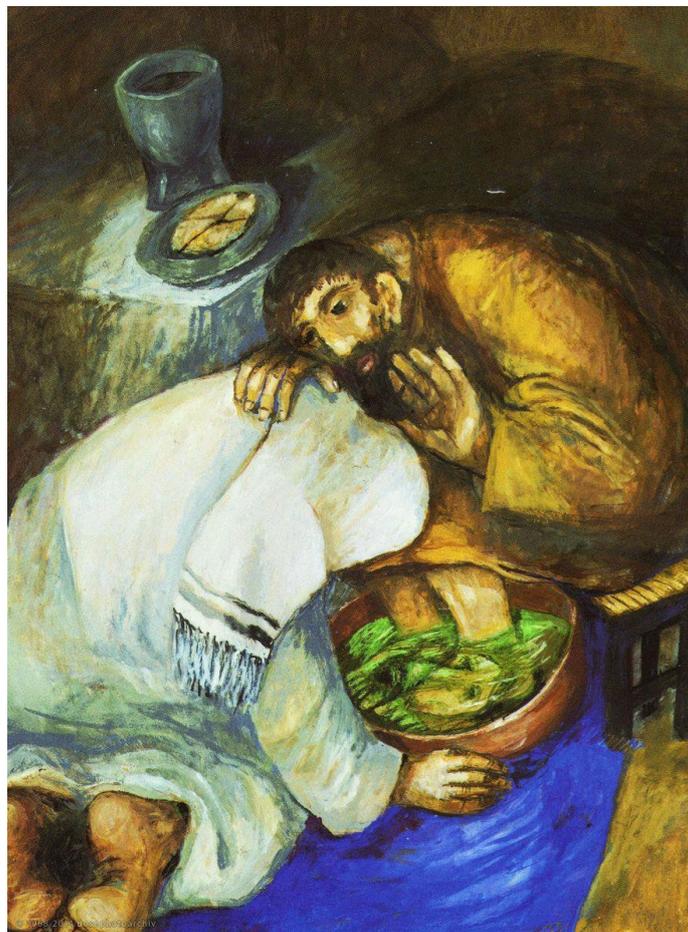
After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord – and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.'

Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. 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." 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.'

*Take a moment of quiet to ponder these words. Although the evangelists Matthew, Mark and Luke all describe Jesus taking and sharing bread and wine at the Last Supper, St John focuses instead on Jesus washing the feet of the disciples – including those of Judas. Washing someone's feet was an act thought too lowly even for slaves. But John explains why Jesus is doing this: he loves the disciples – and us – 'to the end'.*

*You may also like to spend a little time looking at Sieger Köder's painting of Jesus washing Peter's feet below. Jesus kneels before Peter in the guise of a servant, though the sacred nature of the task is emphasised by the striped Jewish prayer-shawl over his head. The soles of his feet are turned towards us in vulnerability, while his face is hidden and can only be seen as a reflection in the water, which is already cloudy and muddy from use. After Jesus has washed the feet of all the disciples, Jesus asks them, 'Do you know what I have done to you?'*

*Looking at our own lives, perhaps in all their muddiness, can we recognise what Jesus has done for us? Where are we able to see the Lord's love for us and for those we care about during these recent weeks?*



## **The Washing of Feet or Hands**

*As part of the Maundy Thursday liturgy – if we were in church, we are invited to present ourselves for washing of our feet by the minister. It is a symbol of our need for renewed cleansing and forgiveness, made possible by the love of God. But it is also a task that Jesus calls us to do for one another. In recent weeks, handwashing has taken on a new significance and a new urgency in our lives. It has become a sign of service and our care for one another in a very real way. This evening you might like to remember this at home by resting your own hands or feet in a bowl of water, and imagine Jesus present with you, or by washing the hands or feet of someone you live with. As we do so, we pray that our merciful God will help us to commit ourselves anew to lives of service and care for one another.*

## **The Touch of the Towel**

Jesus, you kneel before me  
You remove my shoes and I am  
exposed  
My feet are grimy  
full of callouses and cracks  
pungent with sweat and toe jam  
I'm embarrassed by them  
I pull back but you reassure  
You're not offended  
I feel welcome in your hands  
vulnerable, yet safe  
The cleansing begins  
I see your reflection in the ripples  
I see me, too  
Your water brings truth and life  
Who I am and who I can be  
I am whole and home in the touch of the towel  
You look at my neighbour and hand it to me.



Ford Madox Brown, *Jesus washing Peter's feet*

Lisa Ann Moss Degrenia (2011)

*After the washing, you may like to listen to this setting of Ubi caritas et amor*  
<https://safeyoutube.net/w/zKf5>

The Maundy Thursday liturgy in our church ends with the stripping bare of the altar and sanctuary. The cross, candles and linen are removed, and the Blessed Sacrament is taken in procession to the Altar of Repose at the back of Church. A period of silent watching then follows. These are ancient customs of the Church, symbolising the way Christ's life was stripped from him; his walk from the place of the Last Supper to Gethsemane, Mount of Olive Garden; and his lonely prayer and suffering while his disciples sleep.

Our own watching and waiting with Jesus can still be very special even though we do it in our homes. Perhaps you would like to spend some time in quiet, watching and waiting alone; perhaps outside in the garden if you have one; perhaps in front of a lit candle or a cross indoors.

You could also choose to join me from the Rectory **at 9 pm** for Compline (Night Prayer) via link in our church website and then for 'Watch & Wait' until 10pm.

Wherever we are today and this evening, and however we choose to spend it, let us remember together our Lord's willingness to go to the cross for us.

The Lord bless us and watch over us;  
the Lord make his face shine upon us  
and be gracious to us;  
the Lord look kindly on us and give us peace.  
**Amen.**

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