

## CELEBRATION OF THE WORD

### Holy Thursday Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper

This is a celebration of the Word to aid your worship this Holy Thursday, alone or with family. If possible, place a simple cross or crucifix prominently in the room and light one or more candles. As a family, choose the one who leads the prayer, and someone to do the readings.

[Whoever leads the prayer can say: This evening's Gospel, Pope Francis has said, "contains a phrase that is the very core of what Jesus did for us: having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.... Jesus loves us...to the point of giving his life for us.... And every one of us can say: He gave his life for me." The Lord continues to offer us his life, divine life, through the gift of the priesthood, which enables us to receive the Eucharist and to have our sins forgiven in Confession. Though we cannot receive Jesus in the Holy Eucharist this evening, we thank the Lord for showing us such great love. We pray for priests, and for many to be drawn to the priesthood, and we pray that the Lord gives each of us, tonight, a greater share in his divine and saving love.]

#### Sign of the Cross

[After a moment of silence, let everyone begin by making the Sign of the Cross.]

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

We place ourselves before the Lord, beginning with an act of contrition:

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy.

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

[The following are the readings of Holy Thursday.]

A reading from the Book of Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, "This month shall stand at the head of your calendar; you shall reckon it the first month of the year. Tell the whole community of Israel: On the tenth of this month every one of your families must procure for itself a lamb, one apiece for each household. If a family is too small for a whole lamb, it shall join the nearest household in procuring one and shall share in the lamb in proportion to the number of persons who partake of it. The lamb must be a year-old male and without blemish. You may take it from either the sheep or the goats. You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, and then, with the whole assembly of Israel present, it shall be slaughtered during the evening twilight. They shall take some of its blood and apply it to the two doorposts and the lintel of every house in which they partake of the lamb. That same night they shall eat its roasted flesh with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. "This is how you are to eat it: with your loins girt, sandals on your feet and your staff in hand, you shall eat like those who are in flight. It is the Passover of the Lord. For on this same night I will go through Egypt, striking down every firstborn of the land, both man and beast, and executing judgment on all the gods of Egypt—I, the Lord! But the blood will mark the houses where you are. Seeing the blood, I will pass over you; thus, when I strike the land of Egypt, no destructive blow will come upon you. "This day shall be a memorial feast for you, which all your generations shall celebrate with pilgrimage to the Lord, as a perpetual institution." The word of the Lord.

**Psalm 116 R/ (cf. 1 Cor 10:16)**

Refrain: Our blessing-cup is a communion with the Blood of Christ.

How shall I make a return to the Lord for all the good he has done for me?

The cup of salvation I will take up, and I will call upon the name of the Lord. R/

Precious in the eyes of the Lord is the death of his faithful ones.

I am your servant, the son of your handmaid;

you have loosed my bonds. R/

To you will I offer sacrifice of thanksgiving,

and I will call upon the name of the Lord.

My vows to the Lord I will pay in the presence of all his people. R/

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians 11:23-26

Brothers and sisters: I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread, and, after he had given thanks, broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also 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 death of the Lord until he comes. The word of the Lord.

**Verse before the Gospel:** I give you a new commandment, says the Lord: love one another as I have loved you.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John (13:1-15)

Before the feast of Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to pass from this world to the Father. He loved his own in the world and he loved them to the end. The devil had already induced Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot, to hand him over. So, during supper, fully aware that the Father had put everything into his power and that he had come from God and was returning to God, he rose from supper and took off his outer garments. He took a towel and tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and dry them with the towel around his waist. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Master, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing, you do not understand now, but you will understand later." Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "Unless I wash you, you will have no inheritance with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Master, then not only my feet, but my hands and head as well." Jesus said to him, "Whoever has bathed has no need except to have his feet washed, for he is clean all over; so you are clean, but not all." For he knew who would betray him; for this reason, he said, "Not all of you are clean." So when he had washed their feet and put his garments back on and reclined at table again, he said to them, "Do you realize what I have done for you? You call me 'teacher' and 'master,' and rightly so, for indeed I am. If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do." The Gospel of the Lord.

[Allow for a few minutes of silence and meditation. In a family, the leader could offer some words of consolation at this moment, such as: "Jesus, you have given to us a gift far greater than we could ever have imagined, for you have given to us your Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity, as a perpetual presence in your Church. Thank you for loving us to the end, thank you for loving us until the end—for every second of our lives. We trust that you hear and answer our prayers, even when we feel distant from you. Make us, by your grace, followers of your sublime and perfect example. Make our hearts like yours, so that we can love others with your very love."]

Magnificat

## **MEDITATION: Steward, Mystery, Gift What does it mean to be a priest?**

According to Saint Paul, it means above all to be a steward of the mysteries of God: This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Now it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy (1 Cor 4:1-2). The word “steward” cannot be replaced by any other.... The steward is not the owner, but the one to whom the owner entrusts his goods so that he will manage them justly and responsibly. In exactly the same way the priest receives from Christ the treasures of salvation, in order duly to distribute them among the people to whom he is sent. These treasures are those of faith. The priest is thus a man of the Word of God, a man of sacrament, a man of the “mystery of faith.” Through faith he draws near to the invisible treasures which constitute the inheritance of the world’s redemption by the Son of God.... The priestly vocation is a mystery. It is the mystery of a “wondrous exchange” — between God and man. A man offers his humanity to Christ, so that Christ may use him as an instrument of salvation, making him as it were into another Christ. Unless we grasp the mystery of this “exchange,” we will not understand how it can be that a young man, hearing the words “Follow me!,” can give up everything for Christ, in the certainty that if he follows this path he will find complete personal fulfillment. In our world, is there any greater fulfillment of our humanity than to be able to re-present every day in persona Christi the redemptive sacrifice, the same sacrifice which Christ offered on the cross? In this sacrifice, on the one hand, the very mystery of the Trinity is present in the most profound way, and, on the other hand, the entire created universe is “united” (cf. Eph 1:10). The Eucharist is also celebrated in order to offer “on the altar of the whole earth the world’s work and suffering.”... At Holy Mass, after the consecration, the priest says the words ...the mystery of faith! These words refer of course to the Eucharist. In a way, however, they also concern the priesthood. There can be no Eucharist without the priesthood, just as there can be no priesthood without the Eucharist. [from a reflection written by Saint John Paul II before he died in 2005]

## **Intercessions**

Sisters and brothers, unlike any other time, we gather in our own homes to remember that Last Supper of Jesus with his disciples, knowing that he is truly with us for we gather in his name, and we listen to his Word.

1. We pray for the Church in every place:  
a life centered upon Jesus Christ,  
nourished at this time by prayer,  
the Scriptures and Spiritual Communion,  
called to serve in his name.  
Lord, have mercy.  
**Lord, have mercy**
2. We pray for Pope Francis:  
committed to Jesus and his Gospel,  
with a deep father’s love for the sufferings of all people,  
always honoring the gift of creation.  
Lord, have mercy.  
**Lord, have mercy.**
3. We pray for Douglas our Bishop and all priests and deacons:  
prayer before every action,  
humility in the service of people,  
love of the Eucharist and the Sacred Scriptures.  
Lord, have mercy.  
**Lord, have mercy**
4. We pray for those who suffer in our world:  
peace for every place enduring war,  
hope for refugees everywhere,  
freedom of religion for persecuted Christians and those of other faiths.

Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy,**

5. We pray in this time of the coronavirus pandemic:  
healing for the sick, strength for their families,  
courage for those who care for them,  
wisdom for leaders making decisions for the common good.  
Lord, have mercy.  
**Lord, have mercy.**

Father, we pray for your Church called to renewal at this time, that our faith will be stronger, hope more secure and charity ever more generous. Through Christ our Lord.

**All pray the Our Father together.**

**An Act of Spiritual Communion:** My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament of the altar. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and lead us to everlasting life. And may the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace. Amen.

A period of silence and meditation follows the prayer.

To conclude the celebration, you can sing or recite the following or another suitable hymn.

Of the glorious body telling,  
O my tongue, its myst'ries sing,  
And the Blood, all price excelling,  
Which the world's eternal King,  
In a noble womb once dwelling,  
Shed for this world's ransoming.

Giv'n for us, for us descending,  
Of a Virgin to proceed,  
Man with man in converse blending,  
Scattered he the Gospel seed,  
Till his sojourn drew to ending,  
Which he closed in wondrous deed.

At the last great Supper lying,  
Circled by his brethren's band,  
Meekly with the Law complying,  
First he finished the command,  
Then, immortal Food supplying,  
Gave himself with his own hand.

Word made Flesh,  
by word he maketh  
Very bread his Flesh to be,  
Man in wine Christ's Blood partaketh:  
And if senses fail to see,  
Faith alone the true heart waketh  
To behold the mystery.

Therefore we, before him bending,  
This great Sacrament revere,  
Types and shadows have their ending,  
For the newer rite is here;  
Faith, our outward sense befriending,  
Makes the inward vision clear.

Glory let us give,  
and blessing To the Father, and the Son,  
Honor, might, and praise addressing,  
While eternal ages run;  
Ever too his love confessing,  
Who, from both, with both is one. Amen.

This Word Service is adapted from a text published by Magnificat [<https://usmagnificat.net>]. The intercessions are written for the parish and the concluding prayer is from the Word Service that we have recorded for Good Friday and based on a text from Saint John Paul II.