

Maundy Thursday

Mark: 14 :12-26.

Hymns: 71, 295, 331, 420, 284, 512.

Introit: Psalm 116:12-19.

P What shall I repay to the LORD

C for all the good that He has done to me?

P I shall lift up the cup of salvation,

C and call on the name of the LORD.

P I shall fulfill my vows to the LORD,

C right in the presence of all His people.

P The death of His faithful people

C is precious in the sight of the LORD.

P O LORD, I am indeed Your servant. I am Your servant, the son of Your maidservant.

C You have undone the chains on my feet.

P I shall offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to You,

C and I shall call on the name of the LORD.

P I shall fulfill my vows to the LORD,

C right in the presence of all His people,

P in the courts of the house of the LORD,

All in the middle of you, O Jerusalem. Praise the LORD!

Collect: O Lord, in this wondrous Sacrament You have left us a remembrance of Your Passion. Grant that we may so receive the sacred mystery of Your body and blood that the fruits of Your redemption may continually be manifest in us; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Old Testament: Exodus 24:3-11.

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 10:16-17.

Gospel: Mark 14:12-26.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for the sermon is the Gospel heard before, Mark 14: 12-26.

12 On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when people used to kill the Passover lamb, the disciples asked Jesus, "Where do You want us to go and prepare for You to eat the Passover?"

13 He sent two of His disciples and told them: "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him! 14 Where he goes inside, tell the owner: 'The Teacher asks, "Where is My guest-room, in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?"' 15 Then he will show you a large upper room, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there!"

16 The disciples left, went into the city, and found things just as Jesus had told them; and they prepared the Passover. 17 When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve.

18 While they were reclining at the table and eating, Jesus said, "Truly, I tell you, one of you, one who is eating with Me, will betray Me!"

19 They began to be sad, and to ask Him one after another, "I am not the one, am I?"

20 He told them, "It is one of the Twelve, the one who is dipping into the bowl with Me. 21 For the Son of Man is going away as Scripture has said about Him, but how terrible for that man by whom the Son of Man is being betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had never been born."

22 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it, gave it to them, and said, "Take it! This is My body."

23 Then He took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them; and they all drank from it. 24 He told them, "This is My blood of the Covenant, which is poured out for many. 25 Truly, I tell you, I shall certainly not drink of the fruit of the vine any more until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God."

26 After they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us in your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

Peace be with you.

Why are we here and what do we expect to receive tonight? - What is Christ Jesus offering to us? - What do we receive from His gracious hand?

On this Holy night, our Lord instituted His Holy Supper, But this isn't any ordinary or casual meal, it's a serious and profound gift of God to His Church. It would benefit us all to learn and to meditate upon the mystery and the blessing of this sacred Meal.

This Meal is the true holy Meal and the true worship, it's not like any other meal, or man-made worship. - All other foods, all other ceremonies, and all other pagan practices are hollow imitations of this holy and true worship. They serve an empty plate and an empty cup because their meals and worship accomplish nothing before God. Our cup, on the other hand, is filled to overflowing with grace.

When heathen nations ate the sacrifices to their gods, they hoped to receive the strength of those gods, but they didn't. When revelers threw wild parties, as they do even today, indulging in every sinful pleasure with reckless abandon, they hoped to somehow escape the drudgery of their mortality and experience a perfect life of bliss, but they didn't then, - and neither do they today. When any false religion offered up some sacrifice, they hoped to appease their god, - but they didn't.

All those things that the pagans tried to grab a hold of and couldn't, we have in the Meal that Christ gives. We have the true power of God in Christ His Son. We escape mortality by the salvation that is offered by our God. Our God is appeased for us, fully and for all time. He's not appeased because we've done anything right or followed the right rituals. No! it's through the Body and Blood of Christ.

We participate in the only true sacrifice, the Cross, when we eat and drink the Lamb given for us. This is the true worship of God - to receive in faith the gifts He presents to us.

This Meal is real, it's not an illusion. It's not a simple matter of pious feelings. It's not mere symbolism. - It's not an abstraction, but instead this Meal is a concrete reality. In fact, it's the only reality that truly matters because, salvation and life are found in it.

Here there's far more than a wafer of bread and a sip of wine. If that's all that's here, what's to be gained by eating and drinking it?

How wonderful is this Meal in which we eat and drink Christ's Body and Blood. He doesn't merely give us a communion in a disembodied spirit. He doesn't merely command us to cast our minds into the clouds with our heavenly thoughts, or back into history to remember what took place. Instead, He descends to us and feeds us Himself. We touch and we taste God, who is greater than all things, and there's no higher reality than this, this is it! the Supper of God.

In this Meal we receive the forgiveness of sins as a reality, not as a future promise or a future possibility, or an offer yet to be received. Those who eat by faith are eating forgiveness. We drink remission of sins. For this is the communion in the Body and Blood of Christ. Where this union with Christ is, there is also forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation.

Martin Luther wrote: ***"Christ is a person who gives Himself for you, so that it is impossible for sin, death, hell and satan to stand before Him, not to mention that they should gain a victory over the Divine Majesty. ... You have all power that God Himself has; that is, we become one bread...with Christ, our Lord, so that we enter into the fellowship of His treasures, and He into the fellowship of our misfortune. For here His innocence and my sins, my weakness and His strength are thrust together, and all thus become one."***

This is the Food that Christ gives His Church. He doesn't give it to those outside it. If they dare eat it, they don't receive benefit, but harm. Christ didn't hand out His holy Meal to the crowds, but He gave it secretly to His Disciples in the Upper Room. The crowds weren't invited.

This holy Food is for holy people. Of course, we're not holy in ourselves, but through the Gospel, by grace, - through faith, on account of Christ. We dare not approach this communion rail on our own merits, but be repentant and humble, on our knees.

Consider how blessed we are to come to this Meal. We worms and brood of vipers don't deserve to approach this most exclusive Meal, but to be exterminated. We are so unclean that even our righteous deeds are like bloody, filthy rags. But through God's mercy, we, even me, are privileged to be invited.

Not only that, but as we are joined together in communion with Christ, we are also joined with one another. As Luther wrote: ***"When I receive the Sacrament, then Christ receives me and consumes me also, and devours me and my sins, and I enjoy His righteousness. Thus His godliness and riches swallow up my sins and misery, so that afterwards I am nothing but righteousness, and nothing but riches. Just so is it also among us, we all become one bread ... and eat one another. You know when we make bread all the grains of wheat are crushed and ground, so that each grain becomes the flour of the others, they are then mixed together so that we see in a sack of flour all the grains joined together. ... The same way is it when we make wine, each grape mixes its juice with the juice of the other grapes, and each loses its form, so that there comes from it one drink. So should it also be with us."***

As Luther said, *it's not by works of love that we are joined together.* That's the way that it seems to work according to our way of thinking, that we cooperate together in good works, and our love will be the glue that joins us as one. Indeed, living together in love is a good thing. But how much greater is the love of God than our love! How easily our love fails when we grow weak or tired. God neither fails nor grows weak. His grace of love is the constant that joins us together.

Indeed, He who is love binds us. Who is the Christ whose Body and Blood we eat and drink? He is very God of very God; God who is love. So we eat and drink pure love. When we eat and drink Him, we are knit together more closely than any earthly tie can bind.

Tonight we drink from one cup, as a reminder that we are joined as one by Christ. Even though you might not feel the oneness. There might be somebody with whom you feel out of harmony with. When you experience that disunity with a brother or a sister in the Church, go to them and work it out quickly. Sacrifice, if need be, in order to be restored with your brother and sister. For we who are one loaf and one cup should never act as if we were separate and divided. - The mystical union in the Supper moves us to live our lives in that unity. - As St. Paul wrote to the Ephesians, " **Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace!** [Ephesians 4:3.] and from our Epistle reading "**Is not the cup of blessing that we bless the communion of the blood of Christ? Is not the bread that we break the communion of the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we, who are many, are one body. For we all partake of the one bread.**" Since we are one in the Supper, let us be one in our words and deeds.

By ourselves, we are not able to meet that challenge. But we have mighty tools to aid us. We have holy absolution, by which the offenses that divide us are forgiven. We have the holy Word of God. We have the Supper of Christ, our Lord and God, to unite us and strengthen us. Let's hunger and thirst after this Holy Food. Let us receive it in faith, recognizing Christ's true Body and Blood and proclaiming His death till He comes. Let us approach in repentant sorrow over our sinfulness, but leave in joy and contentment, satisfied by the only Meal that gives eternal life. To the one true God who serves us His Meal, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Amen.

3rd Hymn: 331

Prayer of the Church

*P As each petition ends: Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world,
Your response shall be C have mercy on us.*

P Let us pray to the Lord for ourselves and for all people.

Brief Silence,

P Lord Jesus Christ, in the upper room You gathered with Your apostles to eat Your last meal with them before Your suffering, death, and resurrection. We thank You for gathering with us sinners now, and being with us throughout our lives, and bringing us into Your resurrection..... Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world,

C have mercy on us.

P Lord Jesus Christ, in the upper room You washed the apostles' feet thus teaching us to love one another as You have loved us. By Your Spirit work in us true service and humility toward one another.....

Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world,

C have mercy on us.

P Lord Jesus Christ, in the upper room You taught Your comforting and strengthening truth to Your apostles. Support our partner churches in the AELC and defend all people who are being persecuted in Your name. Cause the saving Gospel to be proclaimed here and in all places..... Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world,

C have mercy on us.

P Lord Jesus Christ, in the upper room You gave bread to Judas showing Your obedience to Your Father's will to save us through Your betrayal and crucifixion. Turn our hearts to follow Your holy will no matter the cost.Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world,

C have mercy on us.

P Lord Jesus Christ, in the upper room You gave the Sacrament of Your Body and Blood for the forgiveness of sins and as a gift for all ages. Make us ever hunger and thirst for this most precious communion with You in Your Body and Blood. Cause us to receive You in repentance and steadfast trust in Your saving mercy.Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world,

C **have mercy on us.**

P Lord Jesus Christ, in the upper room You gave the soul-healing medicine of Your Body and Blood. Grant peace and comfort to all who are sick, recovering, depressed, and burdened. According to Your gracious will heal them or give them grace to accept their afflictions..... Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world,

C **have mercy on us.**

P Lord Jesus Christ, You left the upper room to go to Your arrest, crucifixion, and death to conquer death for us by Your resurrection. Comfort all who mourn the death of loved ones with Your victory over the grave and the gathering of all saints in heaven and on earth with You..... Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world,

C **have mercy on us.**

P Lamb of God, grant us Your peace, for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever,

C **Amen.**

4th 420,

The Reading Of Psalm 22 while The Alter is Stripped.

Psalm 22

1 **My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?** Why are You so far from saving Me, from the Words of My groaning?

2 O My God, I cry out by day, but You do not answer, and by night, and I am not silent.

3 Nevertheless, You are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.

4 Our fathers trusted in You. They trusted and You delivered them.

5 They cried to You and were rescued. They **trusted** in You and were **not ashamed**.

6 However, I am a worm and not a man, **scorned** by human beings and despised by the people.

7 All those who see Me **ridicule** Me. They open their lips wide. **They shake their heads**, saying,

8 **“Commit it to the LORD! Let Him rescue Him! Let Him deliver Him! For He takes pleasure in Him.”**

9 Nevertheless, You are the One who brought Me out of the womb, the One who made Me trust while on My mother’s breasts.

10 I have been cast on You from the womb. From My mother’s womb You have been My God.

11 Do not be far from Me! For trouble is near, for there is no one to help.

12 Many bulls have surrounded Me. Strong bulls of Bashan have encircled Me.

13 They have opened their mouths against Me like a mangling and roaring lion.

14 I have been poured out like water, and all My bones have separated from each other. My heart has become like wax. It has melted inside my chest.

15 My strength has dried up like baked clay. My tongue clings to My palate, and You are putting Me on the dust of death.

16 For dogs have surrounded Me. A gang of evil-doers has encircled Me. Like a lion **they have pierced My hands and My feet**.

17 I can count all My bones. People look and stare at Me.

18 **They divide My garments among them, and they cast lots for My clothing.**

19 However, You, O LORD, do not be far away! O My Strength, come quickly to help Me!

20 Rescue My soul from the sword! Rescue My lonely soul from the power of the dog!

21 **Save Me from the lion’s mouth!** You have answered Me from the horns of wild oxen.

22 **Let Me declare Your name to My brothers! I shall praise You in the middle of the assembly.**

23 You **who fear** the LORD, **praise Him!** All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him! Be afraid of Him, all you descendants of Israel!

24 For He has not despised or detested the misery of the Wretched One, and He has not hidden His face from Him. Rather, when He cried to Him for help, He heard.

25 My praise comes from You in the great assembly. I shall fulfil My vows in the presence of those who fear Him.

26 Humble people will eat and be satisfied. Those who seek the LORD will praise Him. May your hearts live for ever!

27 All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD. All the families of **the nations will worship** before **You**.

28 For **the kingship belongs to the LORD**, and He **rules** over the nations.

29 All the prosperous people of the earth have been eating and worshipping. All those who go down to the dust will kneel before Him, even the one who could not keep himself alive.

30 Descendants will serve Him. The coming generation will be told about the Lord.

31 They will come and tell about His righteousness to a people yet to be born. For He **has accomplished it**.

Everybody exists in Humble Peace.

4th Hymn:361.