

Maundy Thursday

[April 21]

Maundy or Holy Thursday commemorates the Last Supper of Jesus and the disciples. Though the gathered disciples didn't realize it, that night together was what Joan Chittister calls the "crossover point between life and death" – for in a few short hours Jesus would be tried, pronounced guilty, and put to death.

A quick glance at the story and it seems this final night together was just a meal and nothing more. Our observing Holy Thursday reveals layer upon layer of symbolism and tension.

On that final night together, Jesus modeled a new kind of authority: a servant-leadership that seeks to serve rather than be served.

Those gathered ate a simple meal together, but also experienced the Eucharist's "introduction" as a profound and lasting symbolic act. And today we learn the need to both be served and to serve.

We encounter simple acts that just might be more profound and mysterious than we initially realize.

We come face to face with the joy of life and the inexorability of death. We are cleansed and fed, comforted and disturbed.

This Lenten season, you are invited to share an evening with others remembering and re-enacting Jesus' new command: to love others as we have been loved.

[supplies needed]

bowl or basin, water, towels for footwashing

wine or grape juice, bread or crackers for communion

Bibles and liturgy

[liturgy] Canticles are read together and text can be read aloud as well.

canticle:	A new commandment I give unto you that you love one another as I have loved you. By this shall all people know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.
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text: Exodus 12v1-8, 11-14

text: John 13v1-15

footwashing:	[As your feet are being washed, read the canticle aloud.] A new commandment I give unto you that you love one another as I have loved you. By this shall all people know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.
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text: 1 Corinthians 11v23-29

communion:	[Serve one another the elements. As you are serving, say to each other:] "The body and the blood of Christ, given for you. Take in remembrance of Him."
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canticle:	A new commandment I give unto you that you love one another as I have loved you. By this shall all people know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.
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closing prayer:	[Prayed together] Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.
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Holy Saturday

[April 23]

Holy Saturday commemorates the day that Jesus spent in the tomb. It's a slow, quiet, reflective day that invites each of us to confront darkness and loss. On this challenging day, "we come face-to-face with the question we try so hard to avoid the rest of the year: how do we deal with the God of darkness as well as the Giver of light?" [Joan Chittister, The Liturgical Year]

This day reminds us of the value of shared silence where we think about unanswered questions and unrealized hopes.

This Lenten season you are invited to share some slow and quiet space with a few others. Reflect on the life of Jesus by reading the first 15 chapters of Mark out loud together.

Find a quiet and comfortable space. Plan about an hour for reading and reflecting on a couple follow-up questions. Take turns reading out loud. Pay attention to the words being read and the silence between the words.

Reflection questions:

a) how did you feel during that reading?
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b) where did you feel the most tension?

c) how did hearing rather than reading change the story for you?
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