

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS ON THE LESSONS FOR HOLY WEEK 2025

Maundy Thursday

- We call this day “Maundy” from the Latin word *maundate*, which means, “command.” It is taken from the passage that is read from John 13 after Jesus has washed the feet of the disciples:
³⁴I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. ³⁵By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.’ (John 13:34-35)
- It is interesting that on the day we celebrate the Last Supper, the gospel that does not have the Last Supper is read. How do you connect the meaning of the footwashing with the meaning of the Last Supper?
- That being said, our readings does include the earliest recording of the Last Supper – in 1 Corinthians 11 – written at least 15 years before the first Gospel account. For Paul, what does Communion mean?

Good Friday

- Though we often participate in Good Friday services that use the “seven last words” of Jesus, that is a later and – I believe – a misguided development. Since the gospel of John is typically not heard for its Passion account, our Good Friday service gives space to this gospel. Here are some of its differences:
 - There is no last supper. The footwashing occurs in John 13, followed by Jesus talking (John 14-16) and praying (John 17).
 - Only in John is Peter named as the one who cut off the slave’s ear. And only in John is that slave given a name (Malchus).
 - Only in John do we have Pilate’s famous – and misinterpreted – question of “What is truth?” (18:38) Jesus has just finished saying, “Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.” When Pilate asks, “What is truth?”, he shows that he does not understand that Jesus is truth.
 - Only in John does Jesus carry his cross all by himself (19:17).
 - Only in John do we hear Jesus say the following words:
 - “Woman, here is your son.” ... “Here is your mother.” (19:26-27) – Though we often name the disciple and mother as John and Mary, the gospel never names them. This has led some scholars to suggest that the woman is meant also as a symbol for the church and the disciple is meant also as a symbol for the ideal disciple.
 - “I am thirsty” (19:28) – How does this fulfill Scripture?
 - “It is finished” (19:30) – We also have here that he “gave up his spirit,” which some consider to be John’s version of Pentecost
 - Only in John does blood and water come from Jesus’ side when he is pierced. Perhaps John intends this “water” to be the “living water” Jesus promises to the woman at the well in John 4. In other words, we find life in Jesus’ death!
 - Only in John does Jesus get buried with a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes. Consider the smell of a hundred pounds!

Easter Reading – Acts 10:34-43

- According to Peter’s message in Acts, what does the resurrection mean?
- Keeping in mind that Peter speaks this to Cornelius, a Roman centurion, how does the resurrection unite people?

Easter Psalm – Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24

- Though this psalm is meant simply as a psalm of praise, note how it takes on an added meaning when read in light of the resurrection, especially when we read, “The Lord is my strength and my song, and has become my salvation.”

Easter Reading – 1 Corinthians 15:19-26

- For Paul, what is the meaning of the resurrection? What does the resurrection of Jesus mean to you?

Easter Reading: Luke 24:1-12

- Only in Luke is there a crowd of women who come to the tomb.
- Luke changes how Matthew and Mark tell about the resurrection. Mark does not have a resurrection appearance. Matthew has one that occurs back in Galilee, 75 miles away. In Luke the women believe the message of the angels about the resurrection, and they are entrusted with the mission to tell the disciples. Meanwhile, the disciples dismiss their account, and even Peter does not seem to understand what has happened. When are we called to listen to those we would rather discount?

Maundy Thursday Selected Readings:

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 11:23–26

In the bread and cup of the Lord's supper, we experience intimate fellowship with Christ and with one another because it involves his body given for us and the new covenant in his blood. Faithful participation in this meal is a living proclamation of Christ's death until he comes in the future.

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, 24and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 25In 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." 26For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

GOSPEL: John 13:1–17, 31b–35

The story of the last supper in John's gospel recalls a remarkable event not mentioned elsewhere: Jesus performs the duty of a slave, washing the feet of his disciples and urging them to do the same for one another.

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. 2The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper 3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, 4got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. 5Then 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. 6He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" 7 Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." 8Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." 9Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" 10Jesus 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." 11For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean." 12After 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? 13You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. 14So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. 15For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. 16Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. 17If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them."

31b"Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. 32If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. 33Little 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.' 34I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. 35By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."