



MAUNDY THURSDAY

A resource for praying at home



On the evening of Maundy Thursday, we would – in normal circumstances – gather for the Mass of the Lord’s Supper. This marks the start of the sacred paschal triduum – the three holy days of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday, with the Easter Vigil. These are the holiest and most beautiful days of the Church year. This year, how we will miss celebrating them together. But let us pray that we might enter into the mysteries of Christ’s Passion, Cross and Resurrection wholeheartedly at home.

“This evening, we remember the three gifts that Jesus Christ imparted to his beloved Bride the Church: the Priesthood, the Eucharist and a love that is stronger than death. We enter spiritually into the upper room for the Lord’s Supper. He, the Lord and Master of all, kneels humbly to wash the feet of those he was called to serve. At table with his closest disciples, the Lord brings together all the sacrifices of the Old Law as he takes bread and wine and makes himself the one Sacrifice of the new covenant, the Sacrifice of his Church. Then together they go forth into the night, to the Mount of Olives, to the Garden of Gethsemane and the drama of the Passion begins.”

from Msgr Peter Elliott’s Ceremonies of the Liturgical Year

THE INTRODUCTION

Light a candle and spend some moments giving thanks for God's gifts, particularly his gift of love and the Mass. To prepare, you might like to sing or say this hymn, praying for the unity of all God's people:

O THOU, WHO AT THY EUCHARIST didst pray
that all thy Church might be for ever one,
grant us at every Eucharist to say

with longing heart and soul, "thy will be done."

O may we all one Bread, one Body be,
through this blest Sacrament of unity.

For all thy Church, O Lord, we intercede;
make thou our sad divisions soon to cease;
draw us the nearer each to each, we plead,
by drawing all to thee, O Prince of Peace;
thus may we all one Bread, one Body be,
through this blest Sacrament of unity.

We pray thee too for wanderers from thy fold;
O bring them back, good Shepherd of the sheep,
back to the faith which saints believed of old,
back to the Church which still that faith doth keep;
soon may we all one Bread, one Body be,
through this blest Sacrament of unity.

So, Lord, at length when sacraments shall cease,
may we be one with all thy Church above,
one with thy saints in one unbroken peace,
one with thy saints in one unbounded love;
more blessèd still, in peace and love to be
one with the Trinity in Unity.

Making the sign of the Cross say:

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

At the last supper Jesus gave us the new commandment to love one another as he loved us. Pray that God would increase in you the gift of his love and ask forgiveness for those times you have failed to love. Then say:

Let us pray that we may love one another as Christ has loved us.

Keep a few moments of silence, and pray:

God our Father, your Son, Jesus Christ, was obedient to the end and drank the cup prepared for him: may we who share his table watch with him through the night of suffering and be faithful. **Amen.**

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

Then read St Paul's account of the institution of the holy Eucharist from 1 Cor. 11.23-26.



Then read St John's account of how Jesus showed and taught his perfect his love by washing his disciples' feet: John 13.1-15.

Then, if you can, listen to Duruflé's Ubi Caritas. www.youtube.com/watch?v=2-LQve92U1o: This is based on the first stanza of the traditional chant used during the washing of the feet. The words are:



*Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est.
Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor.
Exsulemus, et in ipso jucundemur.
Timeamus, et amemus Deum vivum.
Et ex corde diligamus nos sincero.*

Where true charity is dwelling, God is present there.
By the love of Christ we have been brought together:
Let us find in him our gladness and our pleasure;
May we love him and revere him, God the living,
And in love respect each other with sincere hearts.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

Say the OUR FATHER.

Then make your act of SPIRITUAL COMMUNION. :

MY JESUS, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. 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. Amen.

In thanksgiving, you might like to sing or read, St Thomas Aquinas's great hymn PANGE, LINGUA GLORIOSI:

1. Of the glorious body telling,
O my tongue, its mysteries 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.

2 Given 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.

3 At the last great supper lying
Cirled by his chosen band,
Duly with the law complying,
First he finished its command,
Then, immortal food supplying,
Gave himself by his own hand.

4 Word made flesh, by word he maketh
Bread his very 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.

5 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.

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

There is a beautiful, meditative recording of this hymn in Latin, here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9e-RpKy-7F0>.

THE WATCH

If you have another place to pray, you might want to move to somewhere to represent the watch in the Garden of Gethsemane.

You might want to read Luke 22.31-62. Or listen to Ps 22, the Psalm traditionally sung during the stripping of the altars.

see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y0TdIbrN14E>.

It would be good to spend some time now sitting in silence to end this time of prayer.



