

MAUNDY THURSDAY 2022
SERMON – SAINT JOSEPH PARISH
FATHER CRAIG LOONEY
1 CORINTHIANS 11.23-26 St. JOHN 13.1-15



JESUS GAVE US A NEW COMMANDMENT...DO THIS UNTIL HE COMES BACK...LOVE OTHERS AS MUCH AS HE LOVES US.

The Maundy Thursday Liturgy focuses on the two parts of Jesus' New Commandment: God's unconditional love for us; and how we are to show our love for others.

The word *Maundy* is derived from the Latin *mandatum*...the day of the *mandate*...the day of the new *commandment*. Commandments do not come with opt-out clauses. They are the "must dos" in our lives. .

Jesus showed God's unconditional love for us the night before he died...he took bread and wine and when he had given thanks he said...

...“This is my body, broken for you”...then he took the cup and gave thanks again and said, “This is my blood of the new covenant, shed for you...do this as often as you get together...until I get back”.

Tonight we celebrate the Institution of the Sacrament of Holy Communion. In the Epistle, Saint Paul reinforces the reason we are here tonight and why we celebrate the Mass every Sunday in his teaching about the Holy Eucharist...we do this until Jesus returns...

...“I have received from the Lord what I am passing on to you...how Jesus took bread, broke it, gave thanks, and said, ‘This is my body’, and after supper took the cup and said, ‘This is my blood.’ Every time we eat this bread and drink from this cup we proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”

Maundy Thursday is the prelude to Good Friday. Jesus is the Sacrificial Lamb of God. Through the shedding of his blood...he is our “full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world”...once and for all...for all time...an action that can never to be repeated.

The Gospel tells us when supper was over Jesus got up from the table, filled a bowl with water and started to wash the disciples feet.

In Jesus' time dinner hosts were expected to furnish a bowl of water and a towel so the guests could wash the dust from their feet. Guests washed their own feet or if the dinner host was wealthy...his servants washed the guests' feet. The host never did. It was considered beneath his dignity.

Peter objects and doesn't want Jesus to wash his feet. Jesus told Peter...

...“if you don't let me wash your feet...you can't be my disciple. I'm doing this so you will all know what it really means to follow me. I have set an example for you, so that you will do just what I have done for you.”

Jesus shows his unconditional love for his disciples by washing their feet. It was not beneath his dignity. Jesus said his mission was to serve. If we want to follow Jesus' commandment...we must be willing to embrace a life of service to others.

Maundy Thursday is a night of stark contrasts and “Divine Reversal”. Tonight's Liturgy is a celebration of Jesus' gift of his Body and Blood in the Sacrament of the Altar. It also anticipates the event that will take place tomorrow...Good Friday...Jesus' death on the cross.

We began tonight's Liturgy joyfully singing the *Gloria in excelsis* not heard since the Last Sunday after the Epiphany. The vestments are white...not the somber violet of Lent. But there is a dramatic change after we receive Holy Communion. We process to the Altar of Repose...our version of the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus watches and prays.

There is a final act of preparation for tomorrow...we strip the Altar and Sanctuary bare. The Tabernacle...God's house...is left open and empty. The lights are turned off...we leave the church in darkness and in silence.

When we leave here tonight we have much to think about. We need to remember...

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