

## ST ANDREW'S



## ST MARGARET'S



### **Readings and Reflection for Thursday 9 April – Maundy Thursday**

#### **Collect Prayer**

God our Father,  
you have invited us to share in the supper  
which your Son gave to his Church  
to proclaim his death until he comes:  
may he nourish us by his presence,  
and unite us in his love;  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

#### **Exodus 12: 1-14**

*A reading from the book of Exodus*

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. Tell the whole congregation of Israel that on the tenth of this month they are to take a lamb for each family, a lamb for each household. If a household is too small for a whole lamb, it shall join its closest neighbour in obtaining one; the lamb shall be divided in proportion to the number of people who eat of it.

Your lamb shall be without blemish, a year-old male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembled congregation of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight. They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. They shall eat the lamb that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire with

unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted over the fire, with its head, legs, and inner organs. You shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn.

This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly. It is the passover of the Lord. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both human beings and animals; on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgements: I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live: when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance.

### **Psalm 116: 1, 10-end**

I love the Lord,  
because he has heard the voice of my supplication,  
because he has inclined his ear to me  
whenever I called upon him.

***I will lift up the cup of salvation.***

How shall I repay the Lord  
for all the good things he has done for me?

I will lift up the cup of salvation  
and call upon the name of the Lord.

I will fulfil my vows to the Lord  
in the presence of all his people.

***I will lift up the cup of salvation.***

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his servants.

O Lord, I am your servant;

I am your servant and the child of your handmaid;

you have freed me from my bonds.

***I will lift up the cup of salvation.***

I will offer you the sacrifice of thanksgiving  
and call upon the name of the Lord.

I will fulfil my vows to the Lord  
in the presence of all his people.

In the courts of the Lord's house,  
in the midst of you, O Jerusalem.

***I will lift up the cup of salvation.***

### **1 Corinthians 11: 23-26**

*A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians.*

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

### **John 13: 1-17, 31b-35**

*Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John*

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. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then 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. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?' Jesus answered, 'You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.' Peter said to him, 'You will never wash my feet.' Jesus answered, 'Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.' Simon Peter said to him, 'Lord, not my

feet only but also my hands and my head!' Jesus 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.' For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, 'Not all of you are clean.'

After 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? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

When he had gone out, Jesus said, 'Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. Little 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." I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.'

### **A Prayer after Communion**

Lord Jesus Christ,  
we thank you that in this wonderful sacrament  
you have given us the memorial of your passion:  
grant us so to reverence the sacred mysteries  
of your body and blood  
that we may know within ourselves  
and show forth in our lives  
the fruit of your redemption,  
for you are alive and reign, now and for ever.

## **A Reflection:**

Maundy Thursday is the day when we remember Jesus' last supper with his disciples on the eve of his crucifixion. The Gospels describe this as a Passover meal celebrated in line with the instructions laid out in Exodus Chapter 12. These guidelines remind us that affliction and freedom are intermingled in the celebration of Passover, for in the hurry towards freedom there is no time for the bread to be leavened.

John's account does not mention the meal itself but instead (alone among the Gospels), gives us the account of Jesus' washing his disciples' feet. Jesus both sets an example and issues a commandment.

*A new commandment, I give to you that you love one another, as I have loved you*

The name, Maundy Thursday, is derived, somewhat loosely from the Latin word *mandatum*, meaning commandment and worship today is an opportunity to commemorate the occasion on which it was issued.

The other Gospels of course give us the account of the supper itself and taken together with Paul's own recalling, it's almost as if Jesus is saying:

*By washing your feet, I have given you an example of love at its best, and you really ought to love one another in exactly the same way, but I know this isn't easy so I am establishing the best possible way of helping you – giving you exactly the nourishment and inspiration you need. Being present with you in a most particular way.*

So it was that the institution of Holy Communion soon ceased to be the way the church remembered its Lord in the past and became instead the way it knew him in the present. Accordingly, what might have started as a command, became the fulfilment of a desire.

Today we are unable to fulfil that desire but we can certainly ponder the example of humble service that Jesus embodies, 'the Servant King who calls us now to follow him'.

I think that this account of Jesus' washing his disciples' feet should always be read in tandem with the account where Jesus allowed his own feet to be anointed with expensive ointment by a woman of ill repute. (Luke 7.36-50) It can be harder allowing someone to serve us and wash our feet rather than the other way round; for when we let people serve us we are acknowledging our own incompleteness and vulnerability. Jesus had no such qualms and in his openness to both God and humanity was able to receive as well as give. Pray that we may follow his example ourselves.

*Brother, sister, let me serve you,  
Let me be as Christ to you;  
Pray that I may have the grace to  
Let you be my servant, too*

## **PRAYERS TODAY**

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.**

Father speak into our hearts this Maundy Thursday as we remember the actions of your Son Jesus at the Last Supper. In great humility he knelt and washed the disciples' feet. He took the bread and wine and gave you thanks and shared it among them. Help us to deepen our awareness of all that these actions signify to us as we desire to live as witnesses to your amazing act of love and reconciliation.