

Holy Thursday



Suggested service of Prayer and Word

for use of Families at home or in small groups.

SETTING THE SCENE AS REALISTICALLY AS POSSIBLE

[It is suggested that only four 'aids' are needed - a lighted candle, an empty bowl, a jug of water, and a towel. Leave the crucifix for tomorrow.]

[The Leader may wish to share the following thoughts - if judged necessary some points may be more simply explained to the younger ones present]

{Our custom in South Africa is to 'name' this day as HOLY THURSDAY. This finds its origin in the simple fact that it is the THURSDAY of what is called HOLY WEEK. Some customs name it as THURSDAY OF THE LORD'S SUPPER, while in England it is called MAUNDY THURSDAY because the king or queen distributed specially minted coins of money which are distributed to the poor.

Finally, we need to notice carefully and thoughtfully the fact that the Gospel proclaimed today is JOHN 13: 1 - 15. In these verses there is not one single mention of the bread, wine, or cup. There is no record of Jesus saying *take this and eat ... take and drink... this is my body ... this is my blood.*

Rather, we have the only Gospel record of Jesus washing the feet of the disciples - and when he finishes he asks the vital question "*do you know what I have done to you?*" Then he adds: "*You should wash one another ... I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.*"

At the Last Supper Jesus dramatically emphasised the SERVICE, CARE, AND CONCERN we are called to give to one another.}

LEADER: When Jesus knew his hour had come
to depart out of this world to the Father,
having loved his own who were in the world,
he loved them to the end.

LET US PRAY

Father,
we gather here in the name of your Son
and at his request.
He calls us friends
and gives us one command
that our love and service of each other be real.
Lord, we cannot truly love and serve you,
who are hidden from our eyes,
if we do not love and serve our brothers and sisters.

We make this prayer through Christ our Lord:

ALL: AMEN!

Now we bid you welcome, Jesus Lord;
You live among us, your very own people,
as God's own word.
Stay with us - we shall count ourselves most blessed.
Here on earth, no stranger, you are our welcome guest.

[Now have a family member read the Gospel. Ensure it is proclaimed easily and fluently - without haste, and with suitable short pauses for silent reflection.]

GOSPEL - JOHN: 13: 1 - 15

LEADER: If people come to the altar with gifts
and there remember
they have not made peace with their brothers and sisters,
let them first greet their brothers and sisters in peace.

[Now each member of the house, one by one, pour a little water on a foot of everyone present, dry and kiss it - and then *proclaim Peace be with you*. **THESE ACTIONS MUST ONLY BE PERFORMED IF EVERYONE PRESENT IS ACTUALLY LIVING TOGETHER DURING LOCKDOWN. NO EXCEPTIONS.**]

ALL NOW PRAY TOGETHER:-

Father, mindful of your Son's command, we ask you to accept these signs of sorrow, peace and love which come from our hearts. May we, together with Jesus, walk together in joyful support and service of each other.

[The Leader may wish to share the following thoughts - if judged necessary some points may be more simply explained to the younger ones present]

The Gospel versions of Matthew (14:16) and Mark (6:37) both record Jesus telling the disciples to "*give them something to eat yourselves.*" The Eucharist is given to us as nourishment not only for ourselves to horde selfishly but to strengthen us for service to others. We receive Eucharist in order to BECOME Eucharist for others.

LEADER: Let us now be aware
that we are unable to receive Eucharist today.
However, we are able to
reach out to Jesus in our minds and hearts.
Let us ask him to come into us
so that we may be nourished
to grow as faithful disciples in word and service.

[Allow time for silent prayer.]

ALL: Father,
set us free from all that keep us from you and one another.
Send your Spirit upon us
so we may offer a generous willingness
to be of service to you,
your Church,
and your people.
Grant that through our service
we may do you honour
and be worthy to be called your sons and daughters.

We ask this through Christ our Lord: AMEN!

LEADER: May the Lord bless and keep us.
May his face shine on us.
May the Lord look kindly on us,
and give us peace.

ALL: In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. AMEN!.

**We Are
IN HIS HANDS**