

Agapé Meal for Maundy Thursday--April 9, 2020

A meatless meal is to be preferred. The setting should be austere and the foods sparse and simple. Appropriate foods include soup, cheese, olives, dried fruit, bread, and wine.

If there are several persons present, one will preside.

(Note: Multiple households could prepare for this service and coordinate their celebration of it using a video conferencing platform, alternating blessings.)

+ *The Blessings* +

At the time appointed, all gather around the table, standing as able.

After a time of silence, the presider offers the following blessings.

Over Wine

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe. You create the fruit of the vine; and you refresh us with the cup of salvation in the Blood of your Son Jesus Christ. May the time come quickly when we can share that cup again, even as you are with us now in our very thirst for you. Glory to you for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Over Bread

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe. You bring forth bread from the earth; and you have fed us on our way with the bread of life in the Body of your Son Jesus Christ. Let us be fed again soon with that bread of life. And as grain scattered upon the earth is gathered into one loaf, so gather your Church in every place into the kingdom of your Son. To you be glory and power for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Over the Other Foods

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe. You have blessed the earth to bring forth food to satisfy our hunger. Let this food strengthen us in the fast that is before us, that following our Savior in the way of the cross, we may come to the joy of his resurrection. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, now and forever. *Amen.*

+ *The Meal* +

The meal is now eaten. If several are gathered, serve the meal "family style," and have each person serve the person next to them, around the table.

+ *The Word and the Prayers* +

At the end of the meal, the seventeenth chapter of the gospel of John is read.

Presider: A reading from the gospel of 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. ²The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper, ³Jesus, 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?" ⁷Jesus 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."

Presider The Word of the Lord.

*At this point, a ritual handwashing may be performed. A bowl of water and towel are brought to the table.
The following bidding is said:*

As Jesus washed the feet of his friends on the night before he died, as an act of love and of service, as a model for how we are to love and serve others, tonight we wash our hands. In recent weeks, handwashing has become an act of protection, even of fear. It has become functional and antiseptic. And in the course of this pandemic, we have also sacrificed our ability to touch other people. We are supposed to refrain from shaking hands or offering a hug. Too often these days, our hands are seen as agents of infection.

But tonight, we wash our hands as a sign of our confidence in God's love, as a sign of our complete belovedness. Tonight, we wash our hands tenderly, feeling their vulnerability, marveling in their grace and dexterity, washing these beloved hands with the same love God has for us, frail humans that we are. May we remember in this washing, that our hands are commissioned to be the hands of Christ in the world. That we are called to serve others with our hands, as Jesus served his friends. That our hands can be the bearers of God's love to the world.

Members of the household may now wash each other's hands in the basin of water and dry them with the towel. If there is only one person in the home, bathe your own hands in the bowl, enjoying the feel of water and the pleasure of gently massaging and then drying your own hands.

The following psalm is then said. If there is more than one voice, it is said in unison.

Psalm 63:1-8

- 1 O God, you are my God; eagerly I seek you;
my soul thirsts for you, my flesh faints for you,
as in a barren and dry land where there is no water.
- 2 Therefore I have gazed upon you in your holy place;
that I might behold your power and your glory.
- 3 For your loving-kindness is better than life itself;
my lips shall give you praise.
- 4 So will I bless you as long as I live
and lift up my hands in your Name.
- 5 My soul is content, as with marrow and fatness,
and my mouth praises you with joyful lips.
- 6 When I remember you upon my bed,
and meditate on you in the night watches.
- 7 For you have been my helper,
and under the shadow of your wings I will rejoice.
- 8 My soul clings to you,
your right hand holds me fast.

*If there is a “home altar,” it should be ritually stripped at this time.
If there is no “home altar,” then solemnly and mindfully clear the table, removing all dishes,
table linens, candles, etc., until only the bare table top remains. Standing by the bare altar or
bare table, continue:*

Presider The Lord be with you

And also with you

Presider Let us pray

O God of the crucified and risen One, from whom no trial or trouble can separate us:
you feed us with your Word and soothe us with your Spirit, closer to us than breath itself.

Make us glad this night for the life of your servant Jesus;

Make us servants of all for the sake of Jesus;

who for our sake gave his life for the salvation of all.

In the Name of Jesus, your Son, our Lord.

Amen.

*From the *Book of Occasional Services* 2018, adapted/edited by the Rev. Dr. James Farwell and Dr. Lisa Kimball
for use when Maundy Thursday Eucharist is not possible. Further adaptation by the Rev. Dr. Kit Carlson.