

## **HOLY THURSDAY**

All of Holy Week points toward The Passion of Jesus Christ: His death and His resurrection. The final three days of the week, from sunset Thursday to Easter are necessary for our salvation and our sanctification and is one unified and continuous dramatic action God makes on our behalf. These three days and the events which occur during this time, the Passover, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection are uniquely connected and inseparable telling the whole narrative of the completeness and totality of God's Salvation. We pray this is a special time of worship, remembrance and motivation for your life.

READ: Hebrews 1.1-3. Page #1080

The events of Thursday evening are recorded for us in the following texts of the synoptic gospels Mark 14.12-26, Matthew 26.17-29, Luke 22.7-38. Each of these writers give us details of the final Passover meal Jesus ate with His disciples and the institution of the Lord's Supper which we celebrate as a memorial and motivation. The events of this evening and the teachings of Jesus during His final moments with the disciples are detailed for us in John's Gospel Chapters 13-17. John places a special emphasis upon these final moments of Jesus' life which He spent teaching the disciples as these 6 hours span 5 chapters of John's 21 total chapters, almost 25% of his gospel. You may have already read these 5 chapters today, you may choose to read these chapters at this time or you may continue with this litany and read them later but please note their emphasis and take the opportunity to carefully examine and meditate upon John 13-17.

READ: Matthew 26.17-29. Page #891

We are a people quick to affirm our allegiance and yet quicker to sin, quick to question, quick to wonder, quick to deny... Our Lord is quick to love, quick to reach out and quick to forgive. Let us thank God for a patient, loving and forgiving Savior.

PRAYER OF ADORATION TO GOD THE FATHER FOR HIS UNENDING GRACE & MERCY  
PRAYER OF CONFESSION TO JESUS THE SON, OUR SAVIOR & LORD  
PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING TO THE HOLY SPIRIT, OUR COUNSELOR & GUIDE

This is the day when Christ, our Passover Lamb, surrendered himself to those who would kill him, setting us free from sin and death forever. This is the day when Christ, the Bread of Heaven, shared a holy meal with his followers, offering a feast of abundant life and grace for all. Let us worship God! The Lord's Supper is a celebration of God's judgement passing over us. In Exodus 12 a lamb was sacrificed, and its blood was placed over each home demonstrating their obedience and faith in God. The passing of the judgement of God does not occur because we are "not guilty" but because Jesus became the sacrificial lamb, His sinless life met the requirements of the law and His sacrificial death paid the penalty for sin. (Hebrews 9.22, 10.10)

READ: Hebrews 9.11-22. Page #1085

It is indeed right and good to glorify you Lord Jesus, at all times and in all places, and to offer You our thanksgiving and praise. You are the Living Word, You created all things and pronounced them good. You made human beings in Your own image, to be with You and reflect Your glory. In the fullness of time, You gave Christ to us as the way, the truth, and the life.

The gospels recount for us that before Jesus suffered, He sat at table with his disciples and established a new covenant in His blood. In that upper room Christ instituted this supper, after Jesus suffered and died, He rose from the dead, securing our eternal hope and He appeared to some of the disciples and was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

### **Remembering Jesus Through His Last Supper (The Lord's Supper)**

The elements of the Lord's Supper are at the front of the Sanctuary, they are in single pre-filled, communion cups containing juice and a wafer each element sealed separately at the top of the cup. Please distribute them among your group and share in this time of holy remembrance on this the final night of our Lord's earthly life; these are the moments just prior to Jesus' death, who died for each of your sins, who accepted your personal punishment. It is His sacrificial, substitutionary atonement on the cross reconciling us by His grace and mercy to God. We shall do as our Lord commands. We proclaim Jesus is Lord. We do this now, and until He comes again.

[Distribute the Bread]

READ: Mark 14.17-22. Page #912

[Eating of the Bread]

READ: Mark 10.43-45. Page #908

PRAYER (self-led)

[Distribute the Juice]

READ: Mark 14.23-26. Page #912

[Drinking of the Juice]

READ: 1 Peter 2.22-24. Page #1096

PRAYER (self-led)

The story of Christ's passion and death mirrors for us much of our own weaknesses and sin. We all come here as men and women who have missed the mark and are alienated from God and our neighbors near and far. Let us join together in a prayer of confession. [PRAY] "Eternal God, whose covenant with us is never broken, we confess that we fail to fulfill Your will. Though You have given Yourself to us, we fail to give ourselves to You. In Jesus Christ, You serve us freely, but we refuse Your love; we do not love You fully or love our neighbors as You command. Thank You for Your continual gift of forgiveness, may our renewed covenant with You be demonstrated in our inward desire and our outward actions loving You and serving ALL those You died to save. Amen."

God sweeps into our human scene, redeeming all who accept Jesus in faith, turn from evil and pursue good. There is grace, mercy, and renewed strength for all who earnestly seek the new life Christ brings. Come Holy Spirit, source of all life. As we read again the story of the passion, let the same mind be in us that was in Christ, who was a servant, that we might be free. [PRAY] "Awaken our ears, open our hearts, and sustain the weary with Your word. Amen."

Hymns for Reflection:

Here At Your Table, Let Us Break Bread Together, As We Gather Around the Table, Jesus Paid it All; Hallelujah What a Savior, Search Me, O God

Scripture Readings for Holy Thursday:

Mark 14.12-26; Matthew 26.17-29; Luke 22.7-38, John Chapters 13-17