

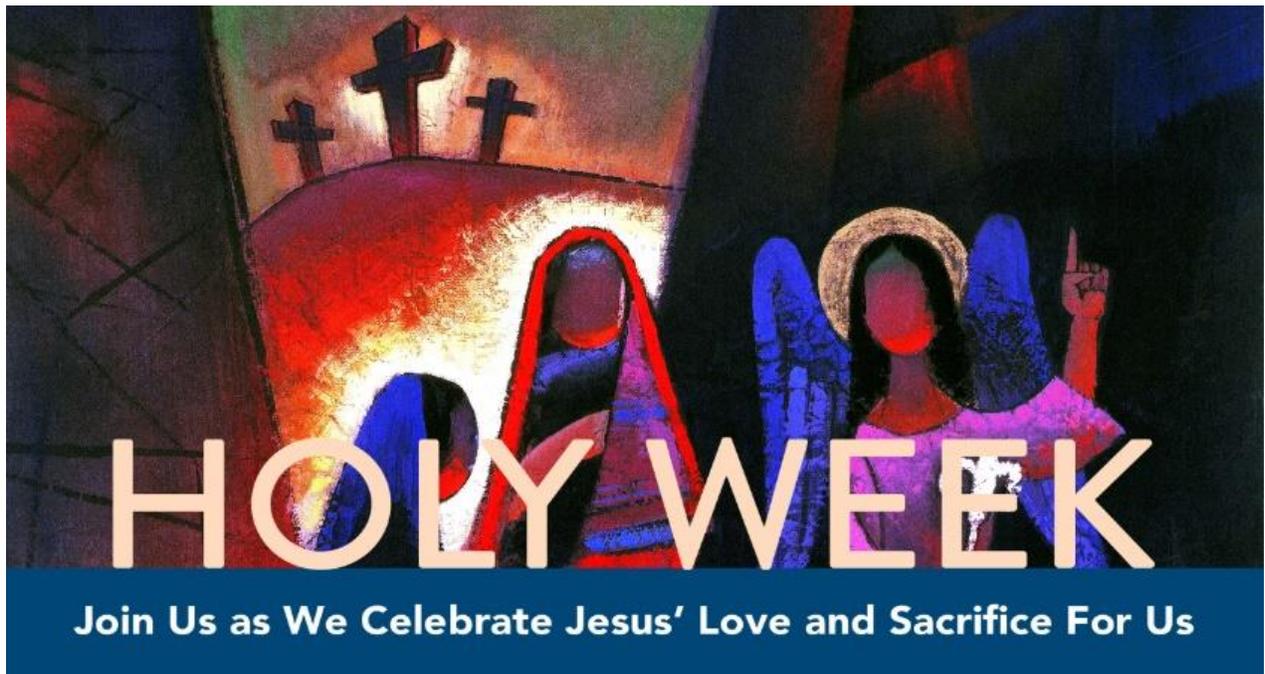
Holy Week & Easter

Questions for Reflection:

Maundy Thursday, April 9, 2020

Good Friday, April 10, 2020

Easter, April 12, 2020



Maundy Thursday The Way of Love

April 9, 2020

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OPEN WITH PRAYER

INTRODUCTION

On Maundy Thursday we remember the last evening Jesus spent with his disciples in the upper room. According to the Gospels, Jesus gathered his disciples around him there, washing their feet, instituting the Lord's Supper, and giving them the "new commandment" (in Latin the "mandatum novum") to love one another. This is where we get the name "Maundy Thursday."

SCRIPTURE READING

Together read John 13:1-17 (NRSV)

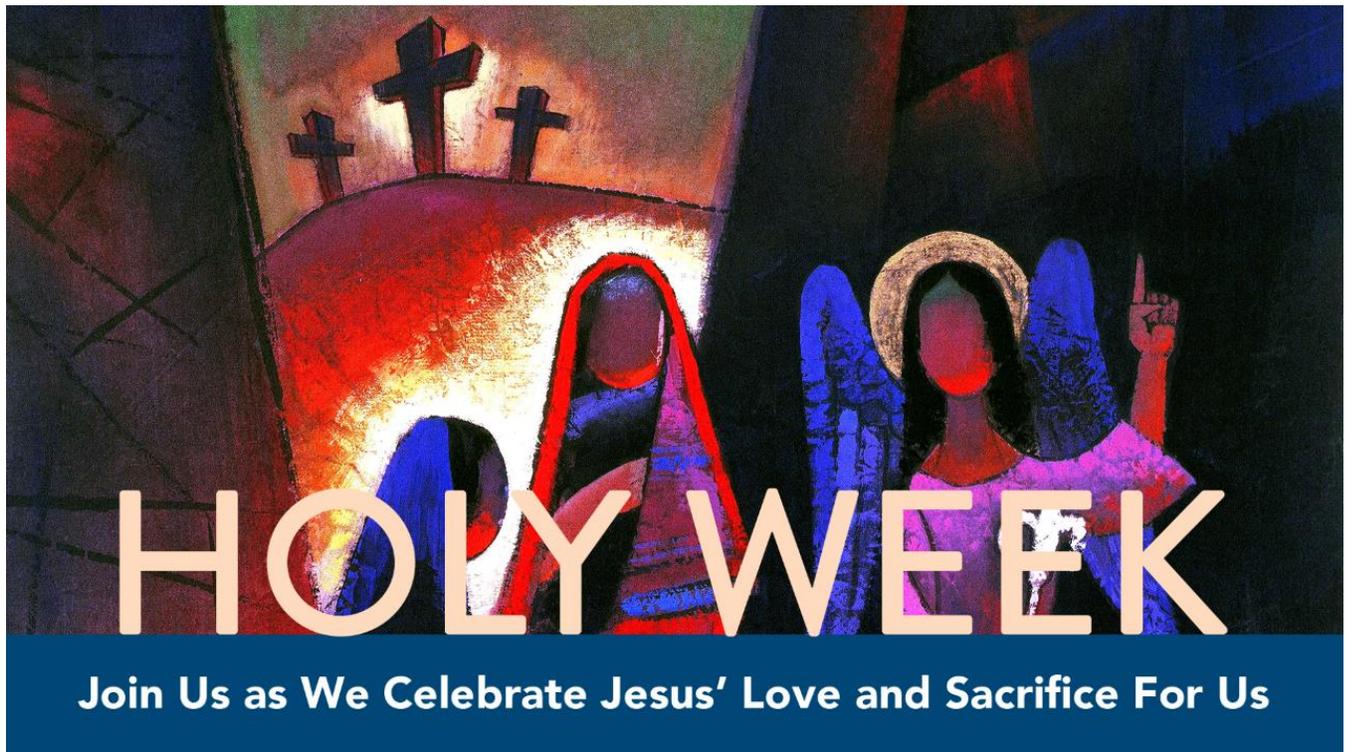
Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. ² The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper ³ Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, ⁴ got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. ⁵ 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. ⁶ He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" ⁷ Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." ⁸ Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." ⁹ Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" ¹⁰ 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." ¹¹ For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean." ¹² 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? ¹³ You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. ¹⁴ So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. ¹⁶ Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. ¹⁷ If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. How has the COVID-19 pandemic changed your relationship to hands and handwashing? Share a word or two or a story that captures that new relationship.
2. In both the Lord's Supper and foot washing, Jesus takes the ordinary--bread and wine, basin and towel--and makes them sacred by re-directing his disciples' attention and intention. During this time of Lent and sheltering-in-place, what ordinary things have become sacred through your new or renewed attention and intention with them?
3. Many of us are wrestling with how to actively serve others within the limitations of the shelter-in-place order and/or our own personal limitations. How might the simple act of hand washing become a profound form of service and blessing? Michelle shared a few ideas for how to redirect our attention and intention in this, but consider and share additional ideas.
4. As we journey to the cross and resurrection these coming days, re-read the passion narrative in one of the Gospels, paying particular attention to hands--those of the unnamed crowds, the disciples, Jesus. What might the movement of these hands have to say to you, to us, this particular Holy Week?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

As you close in prayer, imagine the hands of all those for whom you are praying. Perhaps they are anxiously clasped. Desperately open. Exhaustedly drooped. As you pray for each, imagine taking their hand in your own.



**Good Friday Meditation For
Personal Reflection and Group Discussion
April 10, 2020**

Rev. Mark Stryker

OPEN WITH PRAYER

Invite a group member to read aloud

In Dark Times by Meister Eckhart

In dark times, even in death,
we do well to remember
that for God nothing
is ever lost or gone,
not even in death,
since God holds
everything that is,
even death itself,
in the eternal Now
of abundant love
and endless blessing.

SCRIPTURE READING

Invite a group member to read aloud Romans 8.31-39 (NRSV)

³¹ What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ³² He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? ³³ Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us.^[a] ³⁵ Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all day long;
we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.”

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

For personal reflection also read Psalm 22, Psalm 88.11

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION or PERSONAL REFLECTION

1. What three words or phrases might describe your inward journey through this liminal space (the space between what came before and what is to come after) of social distancing and sheltering-in-place?
2. Imagine what it was like for the disciples on that Friday when Jesus died. What feelings and emotions were they experiencing? What thoughts were flooding their minds? What was going on in their heart and soul?
3. What insights into Good Friday could be lost if we are solely focused on “the before” of Palm Sunday and “the after” of Resurrection Sunday?
4. Take a few moments to reflect on what threatens or scares you, what causes you to long for “the before.” If you are willing, share these with your group.
5. Take a few moments to reflect on your hopes and potential blessings to come. Share these with your group.

EXPANDED PRACTICE for GOOD FRIDAY or HOLY SATURDAY FROM PASTOR MARK STRYKER

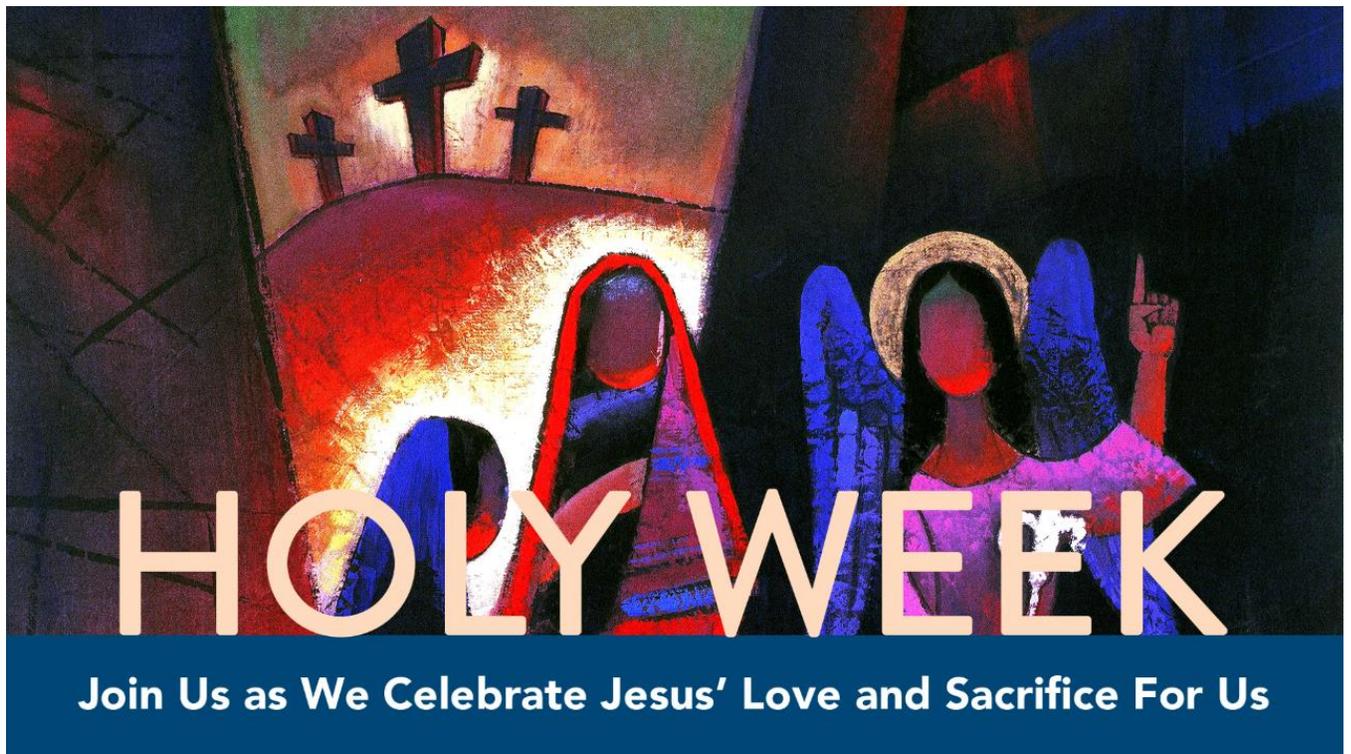
This practice (20-30 minutes) could be done individually, with your community group, family or loved ones in your home.

- Begin by gathering your Bible, paper and pen, and settle into a silent place to be with God
- Read Romans 8:31-39 a couple of times
- In this space and time with God, write down everything that threatens you, scares you, disorients you, whatever is causing you to long for “the before”
- Now record your hopes and the potential blessings to come
- Fold it up and place that paper inside a cup, a mug, or a chalice
- Read slowly through Romans 8:31–39
- Conclude with whatever words God gives you to pray

Share with someone what you experienced as you went through this practice.

PRAYER

In your time of prayer, lift up your fears, concerns, and the longings for “the before” as well as your hopes for “the after”—for the blessings yet to come. Thank God for the way we are being held in the holy place of God’s eternal love.



EASTER

A LIVING HOPE

APRIL 12, 2020

Rev. Steve Schibsted

OPEN WITH PRAYER

Together read I Peter 1:3-5 (NIV)

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What reasons does Peter give us for hope in this passage?
2. How does knowing we are not alone, give us hope and comfort? Why is being alone (or dying alone) such a fear for us? How does knowing we are not alone, bring us comfort and hope? Share a time when you experienced this comfort.
3. God is merciful. What does mercy mean? How does knowing that God is merciful give us hope?
4. The pandemic has made us come face to face with our own mortality. What are your feelings about death? Why do we fear death? Does God's promise of a secure future give you hope? Do you think it is possible to be free of the fear of death?
5. What has been the good news for you from this passage?

CLOSE IN PRAYER