



MAUNDY THURSDAY

FIRST READING: Exodus 12:1-4 [5-10] 11-14

A reading from Exodus.

¹The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt:

²This month shall mark for you the beginning of months;
it shall be the first month of the year for you.

³Tell 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.

⁴If a household is too small for a whole lamb,
it shall join its closest neighbor in obtaining one;
the lamb shall be divided in proportion to the number of people who eat of it.

[⁵Your lamb shall be without blemish, a year-old male;
you may take it from the sheep or from the goats.

⁶You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month;
then the whole assembled congregation of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight.

⁷They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts
and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it.

⁸They shall eat the lamb that same night;
they shall eat it roasted over the fire
with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

⁹Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water,
but roasted over the fire, with its head, legs, and inner organs.

¹⁰You shall let none of it remain until the morning;
anything that remains until the morning you shall burn.]

¹¹This 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.

¹²For 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 judgments:
I am the LORD.

¹³The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live: ►

FIRST READING

This is God's instructional introduction of the Seder for Moses and Aaron and all the people (at which meal, more than a thousand years later, Jesus would instruct the Twelve in the meal of remembrance we now call holy communion). In preparation, look carefully at the division of the lines of texts. Not every line ought to end with a pause. It is of particular importance that the sentences are clearly communicated. That's especially critical for those detailing the preparation of the lamb in verses 5–10; it is a recipe, after all. Three simple statements stand out, and a good reading will help the hearer focus on them: Verse 11b: "It is the passover of the LORD." Verse 12b: "I am the LORD." Verse 14a: "This day shall be a day of remembrance for you." Kick those up a notch!

when I see the blood, I will pass over you,
and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.
¹⁴This 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.

The word of the Lord. *or* Word of God, word of life.

PSALMODY: Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

A reading from First Corinthians.

²³For 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,

²⁴and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said,
“This is my body that is for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.”

²⁵In 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.”

²⁶For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup,
you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

The word of the Lord. *or* Word of God, word of life.

SECOND READING

This is a night like no other. These are the words of institution of the Lord’s supper. In Latin they are simply referred to as “the words” (*verba*). This is a most magnificent summary, not only of the *what* of the meal (“my body . . . for you” “my blood”) but of the *why*: (“Do this . . . in remembrance of me,” “ . . . proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes”). The reading calls for both a sense of reverence and a sense of mystery.

GOSPEL: John 13:1-17, 31b-35

The holy gospel according to John.

¹Now 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? ►

GOSPEL

The power of the gospel is diminished by too few pauses in most readings in the assembly. This reading cries out for substantive pauses between verses 2a and 2b, verses 11 and 12, verses 12 and 13, verses 17 and 31b, and verses 33 and 34. The scene will grow in vividness if the reader allows a moment for Jesus to move from one part of the room to another—from one activity to another—and if the reader allows time for thoughts to form in the mind of our Lord.

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.’

³⁴“I 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.”

The gospel of the Lord.