



A Lenten Mosaic - Living In Grace Lent 2020

**Devotion for
Maundy Thursday,
April 9, 2020**

Christus Paradox

By Sylvia Dunstan (1955-1993)

Submitted by Linda Davis

You, Lord, are both Lamb and Shepherd.
You, Lord, are both prince and slave.
You, peacemaker and swordbringer
Of the way you took and gave.
You the everlasting instant;
You, whom we both scorn and crave.

Clothed in light upon the mountain,
Stripped of might upon the cross,
Shining in eternal glory,
Beggar'd by a soldier's toss,
You, the everlasting instant;
You, who are both gift and cost.

You, who walk each day beside us,
Sit in power at God's side.
You, who preach a way that's narrow,
Have a love that reaches wide.
You, the everlasting instant;
You, who are our pilgrim guide.

Worthy is our earthly Jesus!
Worthy is our cosmic Christ!
Worthy your defeat and vict'ry.
Worthy still your peace and strife.
You, the everlasting instant;
You, who are our death and life.
Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.
You, who are our death and our life.

A recording of the choral arrangement of the poem by Alfred V. Fedak can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rFHdmFadIl8>
You may need to copy and paste the link into your web browser.

Exodus 12:1-14

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. Tell 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. If 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. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a year-old male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembled congregation of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight. They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. They shall eat the lamb that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted over the fire, with its head, legs, and inner organs. You shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. This 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. For 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 judgements: I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live: when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. This 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.

John 13:1-17, 31b-35

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. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. 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. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" 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." For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean."

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? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them."

When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. Little 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.' I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Prayer

This day of dread and betrayal and denial
causes a pause in our busyness.

Who would have thought that you would take
this eighth son of Jesse
to become the pivot of hope in our ancient memory?

Who would have thought that you would take
this uncredentialed
Galilean rabbi
to become the pivot of newness in the world?

Who would have thought that you -
God of gods and Lord of lords -
would fasten on such small, innocuous agents
whom the world scorns
to turn creation toward your newness?

As we are dazzled,
give us the freedom to resituate our lives in modest,
uncredentialed, vulnerable places.

We ask for freedom and courage to move out from our nicely
arranged patterns of security
into dangerous places of newness where we fear to go.

Cross us by the cross, that we may be Easter marked. Amen.

By Walter Brueggemann

(From *Awed to Heaven, Rooted in Earth: Prayers of Walter Brueggemann*.
Fortress Press. 2003.)