



## **A Table Liturgy at Home during COVID-19**

*Maundy* comes from a Latin word meaning “commandment.” The “Liturgy of the Lord’s Supper” commemorates Jesus’ institution of the Eucharist on the night before he was betrayed, the same occasion at which he washed his disciples’ feet and said, “A new commandment I give you, that you love one another as I have loved you.”

Three of the Gospels depict the Last Supper as a Passover meal, full of symbolism and storytelling – specifically of God’s actions to free the Israelites from their bondage in Egypt. In many important ways, the Eucharist derives from the Jewish Passover meal, as well as the Sabbath meal at home, where specific prayers are said over the food and wine.

The final actions of that original Thursday night were Jesus’ prayer vigil, betrayal and arrest. These took place in the Garden of *Gethsemane* (“oil press”), below the Mount of Olives near Jerusalem. We shall recall those events also; and you are invited to help keep vigil during the night, signing up using the link provided. We remember that in the garden, as he prayed for a peaceful outcome to the anticipated violence, Jesus asked his drowsing friends, “Could you not watch with me one hour?”

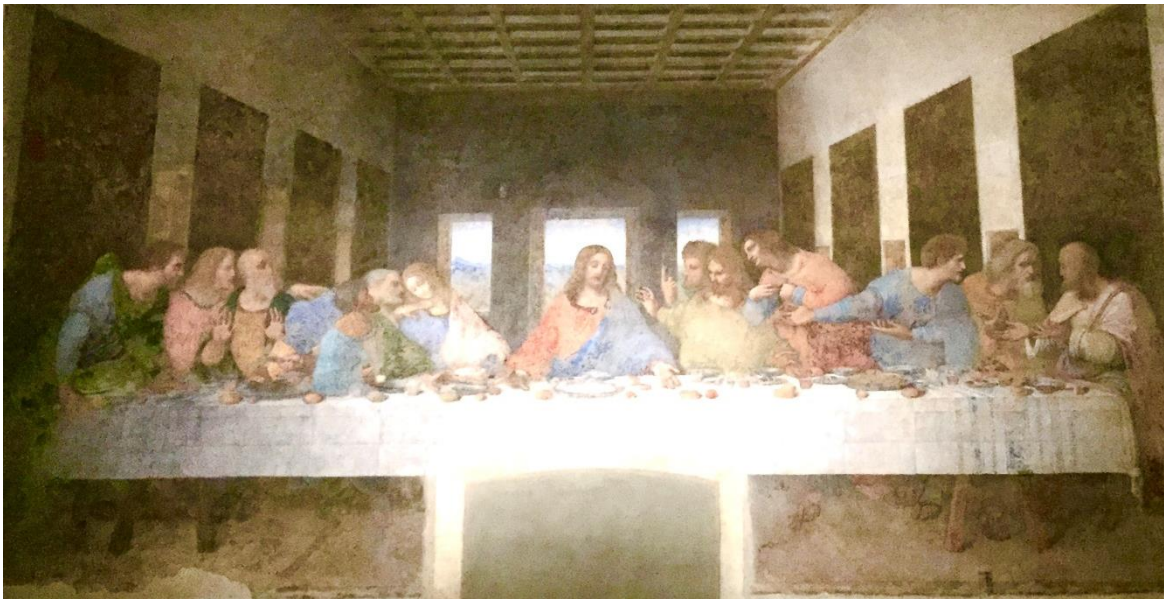
*Some preparations are needed before Thursday evening.*

This service is set at your own dining table, where each household will share an “Agape Meal” – *agape* being Greek for *unselfish love* for another person, expressed in compassion and service.

This is a symbolic meal, and we suggest meatless/vegetarian items such as soup, cheese and crackers, nuts, dried fruit, grapes, hummus, guacamole, you get the idea. Please be sure to have bread of some kind (such as pita) and wine or grape juice for each person. Please also have one or more candles on the table and light them before we begin.

We suggest everyone start the service at 7 pm, so we can think of and pray for each other in “real time.”

*Don't forget to wash your hands!*



*"The Last Supper" by Leonardo da Vinci; fresco in Milan, Italy; photo by Susan Williams, 2016*

## **Part One: The Meal**

**Welcome and explanation,** *by the Rector*

**First Reading: Luke 22:1-14,** the story of the Last Supper

*Officiant and Lector*

When the hour came, Jesus took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. He said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”

Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

Please hold your glass of wine and join in saying this prayer:

**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 the holy cup again, even as you are with us now in our very thirst for you. Glory to you, for ever and ever. Amen.**

Let's all drink some of our wine or juice now.

Next Jesus took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Now take a piece of bread and join in saying this prayer:

**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. Glory to you, for ever and ever. Amen.**

We can eat some of our bread now.

After supper, Jesus held his cup and said, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. But see, the one who betrays me is with me, and his hand is on the table. For the Son of Man is going as it has been determined, but woe to that one by whom he is betrayed!" Then they began to ask one another, which one of them it could be who would do this.

A dispute also arose among them as to which one of them was to be regarded as the greatest. But he said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you; rather the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

"You are the ones who have stood by me in my trials; and I confer on you, just as my Father has conferred on me, a kingdom, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

Each time we gather and invite Jesus to our table, he promises to be with us. So as we continue with the rest of our meal tonight, let us invite Jesus to be with us.

*silence*

Be present, Lord Jesus, as you were present with your disciples on this night long ago. Be known to us in the breaking of bread, and in the fellowship of family and friends, however that is shared. Be known to us in the prayers and memories of your Church. May your kingdom be known on earth as it is in heaven, where your saints and angels join in the heavenly banquet that is our hope. **Amen.**

Together let us pray over our meal:

**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 for ever. Amen.**

Enjoy your meal! During your meal, you are invited to reflect on this question. Pause the video until you've finished eating.

- *How does it make you feel to know that Jesus fed and shared a meal with all of his disciples - even Judas who would soon betray him, and the others who argued about their own importance?*
- *What does that teach us about God?*

Please pause this video until you are finished eating. You can clear the table now, except for your candles, or at the end of the service.

## **Part Two - The Passover story**

*Officiant:* In three of the four Gospel accounts of Holy Week, Jesus' last supper with his friends was a Passover meal. The Passover would include a reading or remembering of the story from the Book of Exodus, about Moses leading his people out of slavery in Egypt and into freedom. This story has always been central to the Jewish people, to Jesus and his friends, and to our Jewish cousins in faith. Their celebration of Passover began last night, and continues another seven days. We remember and pray for them, as we remember how Jesus spent his last Passover in Jerusalem.



*One asks:* What makes this night different from all other nights?

*Reader 1:* On this night, Jesus and his friends celebrated the Passover in an upper room.

*All respond:* **Blessed is God who keeps His promise to Israel, blessed be God!**

*Reader 2:* At the Passover feast, Jews around the world remember God's faithfulness to Moses and the Israelites who were slaves in Egypt.

*All:* **Blessed is God who keeps His promise to Israel, blessed be God!**

*Reader 3:* The Lord God heard their cries, and delivered them from Pharaoh through the blood of the Passover lamb.

*All:* **Blessed is God who keeps his promise to Israel, blessed be God!**

*Reader 1:* God delivered his people from a place they could not serve Him. Egypt is called in Hebrew "*Mitzrayim*," which means a place of confinement. He then gave them the Torah, which means God's "revelation" or "instruction," to light their path.

*All:* **Blessed is God who keeps his promise to Israel, blessed be God!**

*Reader 2:* Today we are also brought from whatever bondage we were in, for the purpose of serving God. We not only have His written Torah as our lamp, we are blessed to be able to know and follow the "Torah in the flesh" – Yeshua, Jesus, the Messiah.

*All:* **Blessed is God who keeps his promise to Israel, blessed be God!**

*Reader 3:* The Covenant to Israel remains in place: God does not change. Only it is no longer based on men and women, but on the better promise of God Himself through the Messiah. Jesus brought us out of whatever bondage we were in, especially the bondage of death, so that we too can serve God.

*All:* **Blessed is God who keeps his promise to all people, blessed be God!**

### **Part Three: Our Prayers**

*Officiant:*

Turning our hearts to God who is gracious and merciful, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

*Intercessor:*

God of love, unite your church in its commitment to humble service. Make us your faithful disciples. Speak words of truth and grace through us. Encourage us in self-giving acts of kindness. Let us love one another as you have loved us. Hear us, O God.

*All respond:* **Your mercy is great.**

God of love, tend to flocks, fields, and vineyards. Bring favorable weather for crops to grow. Guide the hands of those who cultivate, farm, and garden. Let the earth flourish so that all may eat and be satisfied. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of love, you give us a new commandment, to have love for one another. We give thanks for organizations that respond to disasters and for agencies that offer relief and humanitarian aid to populations in need, especially Neighborhood House and SOS-Lighthouse. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of love, give ear to all who call upon you for any need of body or spirit (*especially* \_\_\_\_). Provide for those who do not have enough to eat, those who are unemployed or underemployed, and those who rely on the generosity of others. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of love, you invite us to your table of mercy. Heal all divisions between members of this assembly. Extend the hospitality of the table, that your love and welcome be made known to all. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of love, glorify your servants who walked by faith in this life and who now feast with you. (We remember especially \_\_\_\_). Inspire us by the sacrifices of those who were imprisoned, persecuted, or martyred for their faith. Give us courage to bear a cross of selfless love, in order to follow Jesus. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

According to your steadfast love, O God, hear these and all our prayers as we commend them to you through Jesus Christ our Lord; who taught us to pray:



Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen.



*Apse of the Church of All Nations/ Church of the Agony  
Gethsemane, Jerusalem. Photo by Susan Williams, 2019*

## **Part Four: In Gethsemane**

Scripture: Matthew 26:36-56

*Officiant:* After his last meal with his friends, Jesus wanted to pray in a quiet place. The events of his life and the results of his teaching were reaching a terrible conclusion, as he had predicted. Jesus, like us, needed strength from God to meet the days ahead.

When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, 'Sit here while I go over there and pray.' He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. Then he said to them, 'I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me.' And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, 'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.'

Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, 'So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' Again he went away for the second time and prayed, 'My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.' Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. Then he came to the disciples and said to them, 'Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.'

While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; with him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, 'The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him.' At once he came up to Jesus and said, 'Greetings, Rabbi!' and kissed him. Jesus said to him, 'Friend, do what you are here to do.' Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him. Suddenly, one of those with Jesus put his hand on his sword, drew it, and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

Then Jesus said to him, 'Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say it must happen in this way?' At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, 'Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But all this has taken place, so that the scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled.'

Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

*Silence*

### **Psalm 22:1-21**

- 1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? \*  
and are so far from my cry, and from the words of my distress?
- 2 **O my God, I cry in the daytime, but you do not answer; \***  
**by night as well, but I find no rest.**
- 3 Yet you are the Holy One, \*  
enthroned upon the praises of Israel.
- 4 **Our forefathers put their trust in you; \***  
**they trusted, and you delivered them.**
- 5 They cried out to you and were delivered; \*  
they trusted in you and were not put to shame.



- 6 **But as for me, I am a worm and no man, \***  
**scorned by all and despised by the people.**
- 7 All who see me laugh me to scorn; \*  
they curl their lips and wag their heads, saying,
- 8 **"He trusted in the Lord; let him deliver him; \***  
**let him rescue him, if he delights in him."**
- 9 Yet you are he who took me out of the womb, \*  
and kept me safe upon my mother's breast.
- 10 **I have been entrusted to you ever since I was born; \***  
**you were my God when I was still in my mother's womb.**
- 11 Be not far from me, for trouble is near, \*  
and there is none to help.
- 12 **Many young bulls encircle me; \***  
**strong bulls of Bāshan surround me.**
- 13 They open wide their jaws at me, \*  
like a ravening and a roaring lion.
- 14 **I am poured out like water; all my bones are out of joint; \***  
**my heart within my breast is melting wax.**
- 15 My mouth is dried out like a pot-sherd; my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth;\*  
and you have laid me in the dust of the grave.
- 16 **Packs of dogs close me in, and gangs of evildoers circle around me; \***  
**they pierce my hands and my feet; I can count all my bones.**
- 17 They stare and gloat over me; \*  
they divide my garments among them; they cast lots for my clothing.
- 18 **Be not far away, O Lord; \***  
**you are my strength; hasten to help me.**
- 19 Save me from the sword, \*  
my life from the power of the dog.
- 20 **Save me from the lion's mouth, \***  
**my wretched body from the horns of wild bulls.**
- 21 I will declare your Name to my brethren; \*  
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.

*Silence*

*The Officiant concludes*

Almighty God, we pray you graciously to behold this your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed, and given into the hands of sinners, and to suffer death upon the cross; who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

*We extinguish our candles and leave the table.*