

Liturgy Alive of Holy Thursday

Greeting

A. This Is I for You

“This is my body, which is for you,”
says the Lord.

“Do this as a memorial of me.”

May the Lord Jesus be always with you.

B. You Must Wash Each Other's Feet

“If I, the Lord and Teacher,” says the Lord,
“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.”

May the Lord and servant Jesus be always with you.

B. Do This In Memory Of Me

“If I, the Lord and Teacher,” says the Lord,
“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.”

May the Lord and servant Jesus be always with you.

Introduction by the Celebrant

A. This Is I for You

This evening we have come together to celebrate the memory of Jesus' farewell meal: At this supper so heavy with meaning, he did and said unusual, shocking things. Like the lowliest of servants, he, the great Teacher and Lord, washed the feet of his disciples and told them to become, like him, servants of people. Then, as they were eating, he passed the bread and the wine to them, saying: “This is my body broken for you. This is the cup of my blood shed for you. Love one another as I have loved you.”

These events happened long ago, and yet, he tells us here and now: “I have given you an example. As I have done, so you must do; as I have served, so you must serve. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”

B. You Must Wash Each Other's Feet

John the Evangelist does not tell the story how Jesus instituted the Eucharist at the Last Supper. Instead, John tells us how Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. In this way he showed and stressed what the Eucharist is all about. It meant for Jesus total commitment in love to the service of the people he came to save, that is, to make free for God and people. It means for us that with Jesus we have to dedicate ourselves completely to the service of God and of our brothers and sisters. Total, self-forgetting and serving love must be the mark of the disciple of Jesus. Jesus is here with us to give us the spirit of service.

B. Do This In Memory Of Me

When Jesus instituted the Eucharist at the Last Supper, he said: "Do this in memory of me." In memory of Jesus we are now remembering and celebrating what happened at the Last Supper and doing again what he did there, as we do, in fact, at every Eucharist. We, God's people, are now the disciples of the Last Supper. The priest, acting in Jesus' name represents Jesus. The table around which the disciples were gathered is now the altar. The room of the Last Supper is the church. Like the disciples, we are gathered as a community around Jesus and eating with him. This is a basic act for our Christian communities: to be gathered around the Lord, to eat and drink with him and in this way to become more united with him and more like him. Let us celebrate with the Lord.

Penitential Act

Our Lord gives himself to us in the Eucharist
that by his strength we may do as he did.
In his presence and before one another,
let us ask ourselves whether we have been faithful
to this task of love.

(SILENCE)

Lord, in the Eucharist you call us together
to be one in you,
but we fail to set our differences aside
and to build up love and justice among us:
Lord, have mercy. R/ Lord, have mercy.

Christ our Lord, in the Eucharist you serve us,
but service and sacrifice for others
are often too humiliating and cost us too much:
Christ, have mercy. R/ Christ, have mercy.

Lord, in the Eucharist
you continue to share yourself with us,
but when we share
we often measure and weigh our gifts
and we don't give ourselves:

Lord, have mercy. R/ Lord, have mercy.

May the Lord have mercy on us,
forgive us our lack of love and service
and lead us to everlasting life. R/ Amen.

Opening Prayer

Let us pray that we may celebrate the Lord's Supper
with the Lord's own attitude

(SILENCE)

Our God and Father,
in this night
so different from all other nights,
we are gathered here to partake of the supper
which your only Son left us,
so that he could stay with us with all the fullness
of his liberating love.

He gave this meal to us
when he was about to die
and commanded us to celebrate it
as the new and eternal sacrifice.
We pray that in this encounter with your Son
he may share with us his life and love
and be our bread of strength
which enables us to do your loving will
to serve our neighbor far and near.
We ask you this through Christ our Lord.

First Reading Introduction: A Day Of Festival, For Ever

As the Jews were saved by the blood of the paschal lamb, so we remember that Jesus is our saving Paschal Lamb. His death and resurrection brought us forgiveness and life.

Second Reading Introduction: This Is My Body For You

Paul reminds us that we have to let Jesus do among us in his memory what he did at the Last Supper: give us his body to eat.

.

Gospel Introduction: Wash Each Other's Feet: Serve!

Jesus washed his apostles' feet to impress them and us that service is at the heart of the Gospel, together with self-giving.

General Intercessions

On this night, which is very different from all other nights, we are invited with the apostles to the

Supper of the Lord. Let us pray to him that we may enter into his own attitudes and dispositions of the night before he suffered, and let us say to him. R/ Stay with us, Lord.

- Lord Jesus Christ, Lamb of God, you do the will of the Father to the end; you are loyal to your mission of love. Give us the same loyalty, that we may not seek our headstrong self-will but, in whatever we do, the will of the Father. We pray you, therefore: R/ Stay with us, Lord.
- Lord, at the Last Supper you found a way to stay with those you love. Give us the strength to keep standing by the side of those in need of love, that we may support them in their misery and give them hope in life and in you. We pray you, therefore: R/ Stay with us, Lord.
- Christ, our Savior, at the Last Supper you gave us your commandment of love as your last testament. Commit us to do the works of love so that we can truthfully celebrate the Eucharist by working toward social justice, peace and respect for human dignity. We pray you, therefore: R/ Stay with us, Lord.
- Lord, on this night you showed that your love does not consist in mere words but that it is stronger than death, for you give your life for us. Give us the strength to love you and others with a love stronger than words, with a loyal and total love: We pray you, therefore: R/ Stay with us, Lord.
- Lord Jesus, tonight you show us that love means humble service. We ask you for the courage not to do works of “charity” to be seen by people but to help others quietly and unobtrusively, so as to respect their human dignity, and to give preference to the poor, to the unknown, to little people, to the outcasts of life. We pray you, therefore: R/ Stay with us, Lord.

Lord Jesus Christ, Lord of love, you said at the Last Supper, as you tell us again tonight, that a person can have no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends. Give us the strength not to live for ourselves but, by the warmth of our hearts and our commitment to one another, to make your love a bit more visible on earth, that people may believe in you, now and for ever. R/ Amen.

Prayer over the Gifts

Our God and Father,
your Son Jesus gave himself to his friends
as the new Paschal Lamb
in the taste of a piece of bread
and the joy of a cup of wine.
As he stays with us now,
may he nourish us with his body
to make us truly his body to the world,
the Church of his pilgrim people
on the march to the promised land
of everlasting joy and happiness.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Introduction to the Eucharistic Prayer

Today we are poignantly told by Jesus: this is my body and blood for you; this is I giving myself for you. Learn from me to give yourself to God and each other.

Introduction to the Lord's Prayer

Before we share the Lord's table
as the people he has united,
let us pray with the Lord Jesus
the prayer which he himself has taught us.

Deliver Us

Deliver us Lord, from every evil.
Give us today the bread of your Son
to lead us forward
on the road of love and service
and to be our strength
in the trials of life,
as we wait in joyful hope
for the coming of our Savior Jesus Christ.

For the Breaking of Bread

We break bread together
for ourselves and for one another,
that the joy and peace
of our Lord Jesus Christ
may be with us for ever.

Invitation to Communion

This is the Lamb of God
who laid down his life
to take our sins away
and to be our life.
Come to the table of the Lord
in peace and friendship.
It is the Lord who invites us
and the Lord who nourishes us;
it is the Lord who gives us his peace.

Prayer after Communion

Our God and Father,
when he gave himself to his friends
as food and drink for the road,
your Son Jesus committed himself
to stay with us as the person for others
and the Lord who serves.
May we learn from him
to be committed to our neighbor,

to love and serve without counting the cost
and to set our brothers and sisters free
from all enslaving evil,
as a foretaste of the unending happiness
which you have prepared for us
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Before the Procession

After the Last Supper, Jesus went with the apostles to the garden of Gethsemani to pray before he would be taken prisoner and begin his passion, to die the next day on the cross. Like the apostles, we are asked by our Lord to watch and pray with him. We could reflect on how he accepted his suffering out of loyal love for his Father and for us. We could also thank him for staying with us in the Eucharist, to be among us the bond of unity and love.