

PRESBYTERY OF LODDON MALLEE

Maundy Thursday 2020

Worship for a scattered community ...

Beginning prayer...

On their own, the bread and wine are nothing.
But they become a foretaste, a promise of love made real
and a world made whole:
they need a story, a blessing and people who believe ...

The darkness deepens, and Jesus grows troubled.
We know this in new ways, can we watch with him?
We feel this in new ways, can we be the friends at his table
who share his bread and wine?
Can we be the companions who will journey with him to the end?

Come, let us worship, let us watch, let us give thanks
for such great love.

Holy One,
as we gather this night with hesitations, with fear,
we know what is coming, we pause, we wait.

Music for reflection ...

Choose a piece of recorded music that is quiet and reflective,
something that invites you to be still and ready to contemplate.

Reading 1 ...

The first reading invites us to enter into a reading from the
Gospel of John that celebrates community, sacrifice and service.
A reading that calls us to embrace a love that has, does and will
transform lives.

John 13:1-17, 34-35 (Washing Feet and Command to Love)

Reflection ...

Ponder the reading, let words and phrases connect with you.
Connect with your experiences of generosity, kindness, service -
you might like to write or draw. (Or share with others.)

Reading 2 ...

The second reading invites us to enter into a reading from the
Gospel of Matthew that celebrates friends, a shared table and
food that sustains. A reading that reminds us that in spite of all
that is going on in our world we are invited to celebrate and
reflect on our connectedness, that which holds us together
through all time.

Matthew 26:17-30 (Celebrating Passover)

Music...

Choose another piece of music to listen to, to sing along with or
a hymn/song to read as a poem.

Reflection ...

A few thoughts ... These readings are all about growing in
understanding, about valuing the people who serve us with love
and compassion every day, about recognising the inherent value
of every human person - we rarely see what is happening in our
lives as others' service to us, or our service to them. Sometimes
it's really easy to see the deep and intrinsic value of another;
other times it is really challenging.

These readings involve learning about the wonder of giving
generously of ourselves in the ordinary activities of life and in
anything but ordinary times. It's about the profound gifts of time,
patience, listening and love. It's about all the times we sit at a
table and share food with our friends. It's about those times when
we hear something new in something, we have heard before, it's
about new and transforming ways. It's about being in a bakery
with only 4 gluten-free rolls left and asking for 3 of them, it's
about someone alongside you saying they will wait and see how
many rolls are left, it's about changing your mind and only buying
2.

These readings are also about a man who knew he had pushed
things too far and somewhere, sometime soon, he would die. It's
about this man letting his friends know that they will continue to
make a difference and as they do ... 'By this everyone will know
that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.' Jn13:35

Music for reflection ...

Choose a piece of recorded music that is quiet and reflective, something that invites you to be still and to gather your thoughts ready to pray.

Prayer and Lighting Candles ...

Holy wisdom of God
tonight we recall the meal Jesus shared,
and as we remember him
and the community around him,
we also remember his standing with those
who are powerless and without justice.

And so tonight we pray for them:

Those who are affected by the pandemic
the sick, isolate and the grieving
those hoping for simple acts of kindness and enough resources
that those in leadership will lead with wisdom and compassion.

We pray for those imprisoned for conscience or for faith
those being tortured
those who are abused
in the places where they should be most safe.

We pray for those who are refugees
those whose lives are in turmoil because of natural disasters
those who lack food and shelter
those left to die alone and those who grieve.

As Jesus entered the time of his suffering
we remember those who most closely know this experience.

In the silence of our own prayers we are each invited to light a candle and name (aloud or in silence) the person/people/situation we pray for tonight.

In the company of the one who faced the toughest of roads
we pray with courage, hope and love,
Amen.

Gathering Thoughts and Benediction ...

When you are in doubt,
be still, and wait.
When doubt no longer exists for you,
then go forward with courage.
When you are isolated and alone
be still, and draw on memories and acts of kindness.

So long as mist or shadows envelop you,
be still;
be still until finally the sunlight pours through
and dispels the darkness and the shadows
- as it surely will.

Then act with courage.

May the blessing of God
Creator, Companion, Comforter
be with you and all those you love this night
in the shadows of Good Friday
and the Sabbath silence
- keeping alive
the confidence and hope of Easter morning,
the promise of a stone rolled away and a world reborn.

We conclude as we are each ready,
and continue the journey with the one who loves and calls us
to life and hope every day.
Amen.



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