

FAITHFUL *Celebrations*

MAKING TIME FOR GOD FROM
MARDI GRAS THROUGH PENTECOST

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MAUNDY THURSDAY

Agapé Meal followed by Foot Washing and Hand Blessing

Commemorate Maundy Thursday with an agapé meal, or love feast, as a community event or family meal. The setting should be plain and food simple, in keeping with the solemnity of the Lenten fast that continues this week. A meal of soup, cheese, olives, dried fruit, bread, and wine are appropriate. Eat the meal in silence while someone reads passages from Scripture or poetry that allows for introspection while eating, or have soft music playing in the background.

Materials

- tables and chairs set simply for dinner
- soup, cheese, olives, dried fruit, and bread on serving plates or bowls for each table
- a carafe of wine or pitcher of water for each table
- Bible
- CD player if music is going to be played

The Book of Common Prayer (pp. 274–275) offers a Maundy Thursday liturgy that includes Psalm 78:14–20, 23–25. Noted here, this may be one of the readings chosen for your meal:

In the daytime he led them with a cloud,
and all night long with a fiery light.
He split rocks open in the wilderness,
and gave them drink abundantly as from the deep.
He made streams come out of the rock,
and caused waters to flow down like rivers.
Yet they sinned still more against him,
rebelling against the Most High in the desert.
They tested God in their heart
by demanding the food they craved.
They spoke against God, saying,

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“Can God spread a table in the wilderness?
Even though he struck the rock so that water gushed out
and torrents overflowed, . . .
Yet he commanded the skies above,
and opened the doors of heaven;
he rained down on them manna to eat,
and gave them the grain of heaven.
Mortals ate of the bread of angels;
he sent them food in abundance.

Anointing One Another

In the Old Testament, anointing commonly signified a transmission of power and blessing. In the New Testament, it came to be a sign of love, of identity as a Christian, and of the reception of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. These flowed from the Church’s understanding of Jesus as the “Messiah” or “Christ,” which means “the anointed one.”

Materials

- small bowl
- perfume oil
- Bible

Directions

1. Gather in a circle.
2. Invite a volunteer to read Mark 14:3–9 from the Bible, or here:

While he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard, and she broke open the jar and poured the ointment on his head. But some were there who said to one another in anger, “Why was the ointment wasted in this way? For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii, and the money given

to the poor.” And they scolded her. But Jesus said, “Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has performed a good service for me. For you always have the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish; but you will not always have me. She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial. Truly I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her.”

3. Pass a bowl of perfumed oil around, each person drawing the sign of the cross on the palm of the person next to them.
4. Conclude with the following litany:

Leader: We will remember the soothing,

All: And not forget the jarring.

Leader: We will remember the sweetness,

All: And not forget the sour.

Leader: We will remember the jagged desperateness of Judas,

All: And own it; it is our story too.

Leader: We will remember

Women/Girls: The passion of love,

Men/Boys: The smell of perfume,

Women/Girls: The pain of rejection,

Men/Boys: The stench of blood money.

Leader: And help us on the journey, to help us hold the tensions, to help us face both the delight and the difficulty,

All: We will say “Yes” to God’s generosity in creation, we will say “Yes” to God’s judgment poured out on humankind, we will say “Yes” to God’s justice in Jesus.