

Water, Passion and Betrayal
Water, Passion and Commitment

An order of Communion for Maundy Thursday

Rev. Jane Stranz
Ecumenical Water Network

Scripture sentences

Jesus ... laid aside his garments and girded himself with a towel. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet...
John 13.4-5

When Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing... he took water and washed his hands before the crowd saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood, see to it yourselves."
Matt 27.24

But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water.
John 19.34

We meet in the name of the God
Who promised that seedtime and harvest would never cease
We meet in the name of Jesus
Who is source of living water
We meet in the name of the Spirit
Who creatively brooded over the waters of chaos

We pour water, we listen and we confess our sin

Merciful God

we meet each other today at this cross
as inhabitants of one world...

As those who inflict wounds on each other:
Be merciful to us
As those who deny justice to others
Be merciful to us



As those who seize wealth
Be merciful to us
As those who are greedy
Be merciful to us
As those who put others on trial
Be merciful to us
As those who refuse to receive
Be merciful to us
As those afraid of the world's torment
Be merciful to us.
Giver of life,
We wait with you
To bear your hope to earth's darkest places.

Where love is denied
Let love break through
Where justice is destroyed
let righteousness rule
Where hope is crucified
Let faith persist
Where peace is no more
Let passion live on
Where truth is denied
Let the struggle continue

Reach into the silent darkness
With your love
Deepen the terror of this moment
Into new hope
Relieve the hideous cries
With your quiet voice of peace;
That here we may know your salvation,
Your glory
Your future
In Jesus Christ, the crucified Lord.

Amen

(Source: Robin Green Litany for Good Friday in *Bread of Tomorrow* ed Janet Morley, Christian Aid 1992)

Sing: [Jesu, Jesu](#) verses 1 and 2¹

Scripture reading ~ John 13.1-15

It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love...

Meditation

Sing: [Jesu, Jesu](#) verses 3 and 4

Prayers and Lord's prayer

To you, O Lord
On bended knees
Our heads we bow in prayer:
That you may hear
Our cry for blood-drenched lands
And their exhausted people,
who have seen too much death
and have been afraid too long
to understand your love,
comprehend your presence,
acknowledge your goodness
and concern for them, a battered people;
yearning for freedom
as they bear your cross...
in Tibet, in Kenya, in Zimbabwe, in
Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos.

(Source: Lesley G. Anderson, Panama/UK 1989 in *Bread of Tomorrow* ed Janet Morley SPCK/Christian Aid 1998)

¹ E.g. Chalice Hymnal 600, UM Hymnal 432,
Presbyterian Hymnal 367, WOV 765

*Silence and time to pray aloud
for people and places*

We take bread
Symbol of labour – exploited degraded,
Symbol of life:
We will break the bread
Because Christ, the source of life,
Was broken for the exploited and
downtrodden.

We take wine symbol of blood,
spilt in war and conflict,
Symbol of new life.
We will drink the wine
Because Christ the peace of the world,
was killed by violence.

Now bread and wine are before us,
The memory of our meals,
Our working and talking;
The story which shapes us,
The grieving and the pain,
The oppressor
who lies deep in our own soul;
The seeking and the loving.

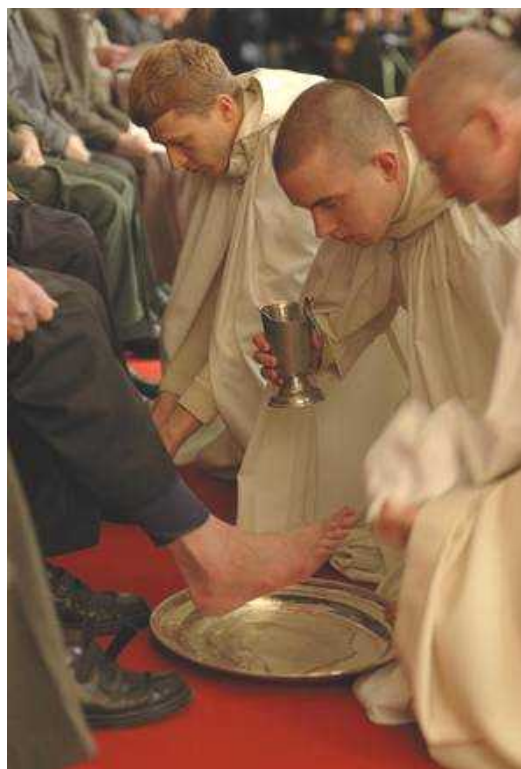


Photo © P. Karl Wallner, Courtesy of Stift Heiligenkreuz, www.stift-heiligenkreuz.at

**And we give thanks to God our creator
for all that holds us together in our
humanity;
That binds us to all who live
and have lived,
Who have cried and are crying,
who hunger and are thirsty,
Who pine for justice,
and who hold out
for the time that is coming**

And in this we are bound to Jesus,
Who in the same night that he was
betrayed, took bread and gave you thanks;
He broke it and gave it to his disciples
saying:

“Take eat; this is my body which is given
for you.”

In the same way after supper he took the
cup and gave you thanks;

He gave it to them saying:

“Drink this all of you; this is my blood of
the new covenant, which is shed for you
and for many

For the forgiveness of sins.

Do this as often as you drink of it in
remembrance of me.”

**This is the death we celebrate.
This is the new life we proclaim.
This is the vision we await.
Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.**

(Source Eucharist of Liberation from *Living Beyond our Means*
WSCF, 1985, altered)

Prayer

***The Lord's prayer (said by each
in their own language)***

Invitation and Communion

*(during communion we will sing Break this
Bread)*

Post-communion prayer

Commitment

Come to the waters
All you who are thirsty
Children who need water free from
diseases
Women who need respite
From labour and searching,
Plants that need moisture
Rooted near the bedrock,
Find there a living spring.
O God, may we thirst
For your waters of justice,
And learn to deny no one the water of life.

(Source *Dear Life* Janet, Morley, Hannah Ward, Jennifer Wild
Christian Aid 1998 copyright)

Blessing

As we prepare to leave
and embrace the challenges
of our lives and our world
let us ask for God's blessing
May God bless us with wisdom
to care for the earth
and one another.

Amen

(2nd European Ecumenical Assembly, Graz 1997, adapted)

*Following the blessing you are invited to
share signs of peace with one another,
saying “Christ's peace be with you”. You
are also invited to come forwards dip your
hands into the water and make the sign of
the cross on the palm or forehead of your
neighbour if you wish*

This material is provided through
the Ecumenical Water Network's
Seven Weeks for Water campaign.

If you would like to support us
consider a special offering for the
Ecumenical Water Network. You
can also donate directly online.

Find out more about the Ecumenical Water
Network at: <http://water.oikoumene.org>

This service was put together by Rev. Jane
Stranz for a Maundy Thursday service in
the Ecumenical Centre, Geneva



A short Maundy Thursday sermon on John 13.1-15

Water Passion and Betrayal... Water Passion and Commitment...

Judas does it with a kiss
Pilate does it by publicly washing his hands
Hoping that such ritual political cleanliness
will prove it wasn't his fault
The Chief Priests and the authorities plot
and scheme, set traps, try to buy off his
friends and incite the crowd to call for
blood
And the crowd do it by shrieking in glee
and passion "crucify him!"

Betrayal...

In the end they come with spears and
swords in the night
Truth and integrity won't stand much of a
chance

The bowl and the towel are symbols of that
truth, integrity and resistance
Jesus takes responsibility
The great leader becomes a foot-washing
humble slave
The teacher does not run away or hide
He takes responsibility in a very personal
and intimate way for his disciples and their
future

Passion...

There is beautiful intimacy and caring in
the way Jesus washes and care for their
feet. There's some obstinacy and focus too
in the way he tells them "no, this is the way
I must do it."
Kneeling there to wash his friends' feet, this
is his priority,
his passion and cross are not far away,
yet he takes time to do this unessential,
essential, caring thing.

Commitment...

The flogging and mocking and the crown
of thorns and the cross will break his
human body and spirit.
The friends will be alone, their feet will
tread the path without him, but not one step

will be taken without a deep memory of
this intimate final washing by the master.

From that time forwards every time they
wash one another's feet, every time they
serve others sacrificially in the world they
will remember him cleansing and cooling
their aching feet and pains with water, their
master kneeling before them in humility.

In remembrance of that profound act of
caring and service we also seek to follow
Christ today as we care, heal and serve.

Jesus' first miracle in John's gospel is to
turn water into wine.
Dead on the cross, water and blood pour
from his side when it is pierced by the
soldier's spear. That water is a sign of the
body's agony and breakdown in death and
speaks deeply of Christ's humanity and life
offered up.

Later risen from the dead he will call his
disciples to conquer the deep and make a
miraculous catch of fish from the waters.

As we meditate Christ's passion,
As we meditate these signs of sacrament
before us
As we meditate his deeply personal service
of others,

we reflect on our own service of others.

We also seek to understand and enter into
the suffering of so many in our world
whose right to be human is being
undermined by their daily struggle for
access to clean water.

So are we going to follow Christ and take
up the cloth and the bowl or follow Pilate
and wash our hands?

*This sermon was written by Rev. Jane
Stranz for a Maundy Thursday service in
the Ecumenical Centre, Geneva.*