

HOLY THURSDAY  
APRIL 1, 2021

RETURN TO THE TABLE

On this night known in the Church as Holy Thursday, Jesus invites us to join Him once again at His Table. He knows our need for strengthening and reassurance. The place in which we gather is filled with the blessing of fellowship as we remember the new command of our Lord Jesus to love one another. Our Lord serves us in many ways, most singularly as the Host at His Table, where we receive His body and blood for the forgiveness of sins. Time and again we are invited to return to the Table, where truly we experience a foretaste of the feast to come.

+ PREPARATION +

OPENING HYMN: #618 – [\*I Come, O Savior, to Thy Table\*](#)

INVOCATION

P In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
C **Amen.**

OPENING SENTENCES (*Psalm 43:4; 124:8; 32:5*)

P I will go to the altar of God,  
C **to God my exceeding joy.**

P Our help is in the name of the Lord,  
C **who made heaven and earth.**

P I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord,  
C **and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

P In the Upper Room, our Lord Jesus Christ gave a new command that His people are to love one another as He has loved us. When we look at our lives, we see clearly that we have not fulfilled that new command. We know that we are by nature sinful and unclean and realize that we have transgressed the Law of God in thought, word, and deed. We have not loved our neighbor as ourselves and have passed by countless opportunities to be of service in the name of the Lord. In His mercy, God has promised His forgiveness to those who repent and turn to Him, humbly asking for His grace in Christ Jesus. Let us then make our confession to our God. O almighty God, merciful Father,

C **I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of**

**Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.**

P God be merciful to you and strengthen your faith. In the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

INTROIT - *Psalm 116:1-4; antiphon: v. 5 (spoken responsively)*

Gracious is the LORD, and righteous;  
our God is merciful.

**I love the LORD, because He has heard  
my voice and my pleas for mercy.**

Because He inclined His ear to me,  
therefore I will call on Him as long as I live.

**The snares of death encompassed me; the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me;  
I suffered distress and anguish.**

Then I called on the name of the LORD:  
“O LORD, I pray, deliver my soul!”

**Gracious is the LORD, and righteous;  
our God is merciful.**

SALUTATION and PRAYER OF THE DAY

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Let us pray.

O Lord, in this wondrous Sacrament You have left us a remembrance of Your Passion. Grant that we may so receive the sacred mystery of Your body and blood that the fruits of Your redemption may continually be manifest in us; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

+ WORD +

FIRST READING - *Exodus 24:3-11*

P A reading from Exodus, the twenty-fourth chapter.

<sup>3</sup> Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the just decrees. And all the people answered with one voice and said, “All the words that the LORD has spoken we will do.” <sup>4</sup> And Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD. He rose early in the morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars,

according to the twelve tribes of Israel. <sup>5</sup> And he sent young men of the people of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD. <sup>6</sup> And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he threw against the altar. <sup>7</sup> Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient." <sup>8</sup> And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."

<sup>9</sup> Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, <sup>10</sup> and they saw the God of Israel. There was under His feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness. <sup>11</sup> And He did not lay His hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; they beheld God, and ate and drank.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM - *Psalms 116:12–19* (spoken responsively)

<sup>12</sup>What shall I render to the LORD  
for all his benefits to me?

<sup>13</sup>**I will lift up the cup of salvation  
and call on the name of the LORD,**

<sup>14</sup>I will pay my vows to the LORD  
in the presence of all his people.

<sup>15</sup>**Precious in the sight of the LORD  
is the death of his saints.**

<sup>16</sup>O LORD, I am your servant;  
I am your servant, the son of your maidservant.  
You have loosed my bonds.

<sup>17</sup>**I will offer to you the sacrifice of thanksgiving  
and call on the name of the LORD.**

<sup>18</sup>I will pay my vows to the LORD  
in the presence of all his people,

<sup>19</sup>**in the courts of the house of the LORD,  
in your midst, O Jerusalem. Praise the LORD!**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

SECOND READING - *1 Corinthians 10:16–17*

P A reading from First Corinthians, the tenth chapter.

<sup>16</sup> The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? <sup>17</sup> Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

P This is the Word of the Lord.  
C **Thanks be to God.**

HOLY GOSPEL - *Mark 14:12–26*

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the fourteenth chapter.  
C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

<sup>12</sup> On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, [Jesus'] disciples said to Him, "Where will You have us go and prepare for You to eat the Passover?" <sup>13</sup> And He sent two of His disciples and said to them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him, <sup>14</sup> and wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, Where is My guest room, where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?' <sup>15</sup> And he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready; there prepare for us." <sup>16</sup> And the disciples set out and went to the city and found it just as He had told them, and they prepared the Passover.

<sup>17</sup> And when it was evening, He came with the twelve. <sup>18</sup> And as they were reclining at table and eating, Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me, one who is eating with Me." <sup>19</sup> They began to be sorrowful and to say to Him one after another, "Is it I?" <sup>20</sup> He said to them, "It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the dish with Me. <sup>21</sup> For the Son of Man goes as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born."

<sup>22</sup> And as they were eating, He took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is My body." <sup>23</sup> And He took a cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, and they all drank of it. <sup>24</sup> And He said to them, "This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. <sup>25</sup> Truly, I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

<sup>26</sup> And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.  
C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

SERMON HYMN: #617 - [\*O Lord, We Praise Thee\*](#)

SERMON: *Return to the Table*

NICENE CREED

C **I believe in one God,  
the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth  
and of all things visible and invisible.**

**And in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the only-begotten Son of God,  
begotten of His Father before all worlds,  
God of God, Light of Light,  
very God of very God,  
begotten, not made,  
being of one substance with the Father,  
by whom all things were made;  
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven  
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary  
and was made man;  
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.  
He suffered and was buried.  
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures  
and ascended into heaven  
and sits at the right hand of the Father.  
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead,  
whose kingdom will have no end.**

**And I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the Lord and giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,  
who spoke by the prophets.  
And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,  
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,  
and I look for the resurrection of the dead  
and the life + of the world to come. Amen.**

#### PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

*After each petition:*

**Pastor:** ... let us pray to the Lord:

**People: Lord, have mercy.**

*At conclusion:*

**Pastor:** ... one God, now and forever.

**People: Amen.**

**P** O Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, as You call us to repentance and to prayer, with faith and hope we turn to You, the source of mercy and love. Remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

#### LORD'S PRAYER

**C** **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.**

#### THE STRIPPING OF THE ALTAR

*The Communion vessels are reverently removed from the altar, the altar is stripped, and the chancel is cleared in preparation for the solemn services of Good Friday. While this is done, Psalm 22 is spoken.*

#### PSALM 22

<sup>1</sup>My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?  
Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?  
<sup>2</sup>**O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer,  
and by night, but I find no rest.**

<sup>3</sup>Yet you are holy,  
enthroned on the praises of Israel.  
<sup>4</sup>**In you our fathers trusted;  
they trusted, and you delivered them.**

<sup>5</sup>To you they cried and were rescued;  
in you they trusted and were not put to shame.  
<sup>6</sup>**But I am a worm and not a man,  
scorned by mankind and despised by the people.**

<sup>7</sup>All who see me mock me;  
they make mouths at me; they wag their heads;  
<sup>8</sup>**“He trusts in the LORD; let him deliver him;  
let him rescue him, for he delights in him!”**

<sup>9</sup>Yet you are he who took me from the womb;  
you made me trust you at my mother’s breasts.  
<sup>10</sup>**On you was I cast from my birth,  
and from my mother’s womb you have been my God.**

<sup>11</sup>Be not far from me,  
for trouble is near,  
and there is none to help.  
<sup>12</sup>**Many bulls encompass me;  
strong bulls of Bashan surround me;**

<sup>13</sup>they open wide their mouths at me,  
like a ravening and roaring lion.  
<sup>14</sup>**I am poured out like water,  
and all my bones are out of joint;  
my heart is like wax;  
it is melted within my breast;**

<sup>15</sup>my strength is dried up like a potsherd,  
and my tongue sticks to my jaws;  
you lay me in the dust of death.

<sup>16</sup>**For dogs encompass me;  
a company of evildoers encircles me;  
they have pierced my hands and feet—**

<sup>17</sup>I can count all my bones—  
they stare and gloat over me;

<sup>18</sup>**they divide my garments among them,  
and for my clothing they cast lots.**

<sup>19</sup>But you, O LORD, do not be far off!  
O you my help, come quickly to my aid!

<sup>20</sup>**Deliver my soul from the sword,  
my precious life from the power of the dog!**

<sup>21</sup>Save me from the mouth of the lion!  
You have rescued me from the horns of the wild oxen!

<sup>22</sup>**I will tell of your name to my brothers;  
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you:**

<sup>23</sup>You who fear the LORD, praise him!  
All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him,  
and stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel!

<sup>24</sup>**For he has not despised or abhorred  
the affliction of the afflicted,  
and he has not hidden his face from him,  
but has heard, when he cried to him.**

<sup>25</sup>From you comes my praise in the great congregation;  
my vows I will perform before those who fear him.

<sup>26</sup>**The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied;  
those who seek him shall praise the LORD!  
May your hearts live forever!**

<sup>27</sup>All the ends of the earth shall remember  
and turn to the LORD,  
and all the families of the nations  
shall worship before you.

<sup>28</sup>**For kingship belongs to the LORD,  
and he rules over the nations.**

<sup>29</sup>All the prosperous of the earth eat and worship;  
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust,  
even the one who could not keep himself alive.

<sup>30</sup>**Posterity shall serve him;  
it shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation;**

<sup>31</sup>they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn,

that he has done it.

**Acknowledgments**

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