

On this holy night in which our Lord gathered His disciples in the Upper Room, we come to You, O Lord, in His name with the concerns of our hearts for ourselves and all people.

Grant love for the things of Your Kingdom. Preserve us who are unable to gather together as we wish. Give Your Church harmony to confess Your Word with one voice before the world. Cover us with the blood of Christ, and grant us Your Spirit, that we may walk in Your ways and do the good You desire. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Deliver us, O Lord, from every temptation, and lead us to know and do what is holy and right according to Your Word. Bless all the Baptized, that we would be steadfast in faith in Christ, our Lord. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

In the midst of a plague and a world filled with fear, give us wise leaders, O Lord, that we may be preserved from harm. Guide those who make and administer our laws to act in timely and prudent ways, and give to all judges wisdom to render justice with mercy. Bless all military, emergency and medical workers who defend and help us here and abroad. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

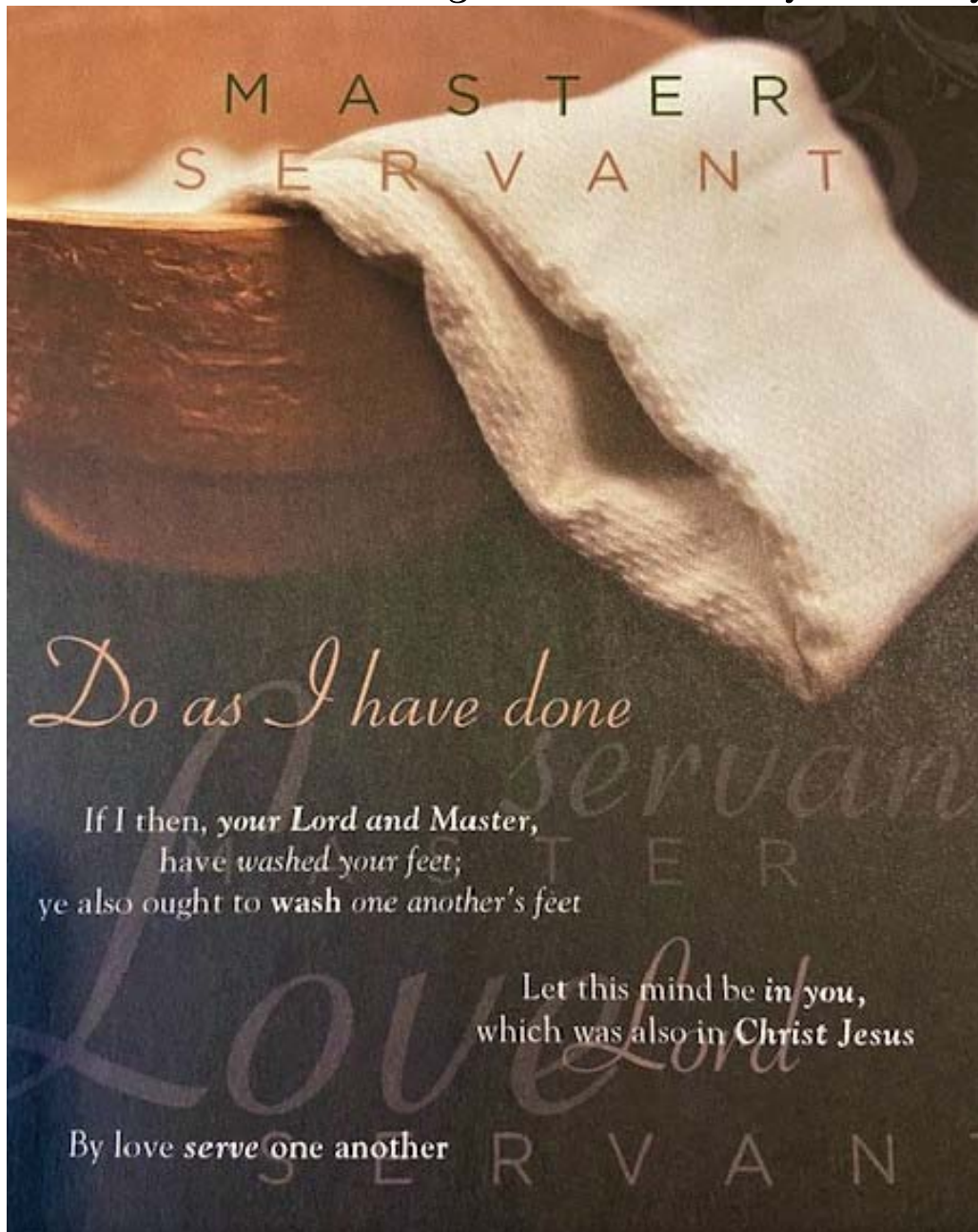
As generously as You have given to us, O Lord, teach us to be generous in giving, that the poor may not suffer want nor Your Church be deprived of the resources to serve Your purpose. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Have mercy, Lord, spare Your people and turn this pandemic away! Preserve the sick, comfort the fearful, and grant Your peace to the dying. Hear us on behalf of all those who we name before You now or in our hearts, especially..... Give us healing in accordance with Your will, strength to bear up under the burdens of this mortal life, and comfort and hope in this and every trial. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father, we remember on Holy Thursday that Your Son instituted the Sacrament of Holy Communion to eat and to drink, and that what is promised in His testament may be truly received by His friends and heirs. Have mercy on all who are kept from Your table in extraordinary circumstances, and do not shut us out of Your Supper forever. Let the words of this testament echo in our ears and hearts and, in true faith, let us believe these words, trusting that we receive in faith exactly what Your Son has both won and declared: the forgiveness of sins. Stir up in us a desire to commune with our fellow Christians on Your true body and blood, and bring us soon to the table. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You know, O Lord, what we need, and You have promised never to abandon us. Help us to endure in faith and, with a joy receive the blessings of Your grace and the answers to our prayers; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

A Service of the Breaking of Bread for Holy Thursday



Gathering

Gather your family together. If possible, gather for a meal (perhaps bread, salad, main course and dessert). Whether it's a physical gathering or one enabled by the computer, this is a service that reminds us that we are not alone. So get your family Bible out, and gather around the Word of God which nourishes the soul.

Introduction

(to be read by the head of the household)

Given our current situation this particular Maundy Thursday, we are reminded of a hero of the Church, Athanasius. He was exiled for defending the Nicene Creed in the 4th century. Disappointed because he was unable to be with his church family for their Easter celebration, he penned this during this difficult time:

“While I then committed all my affairs to God, I was anxious to celebrate the feast with you, not taking into account the distance between us. For although place separate us, yet the Lord, the Giver of the feast, and Who is Himself our feast, Who is also the Bestower of the Spirit, brings us together in mind, in harmony, and in the bond of peace. For when we mind and think the same things, and offer up the same prayers on behalf of each other, no place can separate us, but the Lord gathers and unites us together. For if He promises that ‘when two or three are gathered together in His name, He is in the midst of them’ (Matthew 18:20), it is plain that being in the midst of those who in every place are gathered together, He unites them, and receives the prayers of all of them, as if they were near, and listens to all of them, as they cry out the same ‘Amen’. I have borne affliction like this, and all those trials which I mentioned, my brethren, when I wrote to you.” *(Athanasius’ 10th letter)*

This helps us understand that though we may be isolated from our church family, we are always connected to one another in Jesus Christ. So, let us break bread together and offer up prayers to God together, not just with those in this house, but with all Christian everywhere around the world.

Reading 1: Luke 22:14-16

(by another person, perhaps from your family Bible or below)

When the hour came, Jesus and His apostles reclined at the table. And He said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.”

Prayer

(to be read by another person)

O Lord bless this gathering this evening that as we break bread together in prayer that we are united in faith with the Body of Christ. For like Your Son we have desired to break bread together so we may laugh, cry and learn with each other, focusing our minds on the blessings we do have from You, and looking forward to the blessings You will give us in the future. Amen.

Video

(Watch the video provided for this service of the breaking of the bread. Access it on Holy Cross' Facebook, YouTube channel from [http://www.holycrossclarenc.com/.](http://www.holycrossclarenc.com/))

The Breaking of the Bread

(Bread is placed before the head of the household. Choose the type of bread that is special to those who gather. The important thing is that everyone find enjoyment in the selection. It also makes sense to have a salad at this part of the meal as well.)

Reading 2: Acts 4:46-47

(by the head of the household, from the family Bible or below)

Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Prayer:

(by the head of the household)

Lord, You gave Your body to be broken on the cross for us, and Your body was raised again for eternity. As You then gathered the new church together after the giving of the Holy Spirit, You now gather us together. We gather in

our homes at a time when the whole church cannot gather physically. As we break this bread together, we are reminded that Your resurrected body cannot be broken; we are still connected across time and space to all of the others who believe in You. So, we thank You that we do not break this bread only with those sitting around this table. We also break it with Your Church around the world and in heaven. Bless this bread and all of the bread broken everywhere, that we may all know we are never alone. Amen.

Sharing of the Bread

(At this time the bread and salad are shared with all of those at the table. The leader should encourage everyone around the table to remember those they have worshiped with in the past. The stories shared should be open, funny, touching and reverent, for it is a time to share the importance of gathering the body of Christ together.)

Presenting the Main Course

(The main course is placed upon the table. Once again, it should be something that celebrates those gathered at this meal.)

Reading 3: John 13:12-17

(by another person, from the family Bible or below)

When He had finished washing their feet, He put on His clothes and returned to His place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” He asked them. “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

Prayer

(by another person)

O, Lord we thank you that Your Son came and demonstrated what it means to serve others. He is God yet he dies for our sins. This a level of service that changed the world. Lord lead us to serve one another especially in this time of great need. May we seek what is best for our neighbor thus following Your example the night in which you were betrayed. So Lord bless this food we are about to receive as we celebrate all who have served us in our lives.)

(The main course is served, and the leader should encourage a discussion of the many times we benefited from someone serving us. Once again, the tone of the stories can be lighthearted, heartwarming, etc.)

Dessert

(The dessert should be placed on the table.)

Reading 4: Psalm 23

(everyone together from below)

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall lack nothing.

He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside quiet waters.

He refreshes my soul.

He guides me along the path of righteousness paths for His name's sake.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Surely Your goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Prayer
(by another person)

Lord, as You have led us beside quiet waters, through the valley of the shadow of death, and made our cups overflow with blessings, lead us now through this time of uncertainty to know that we all shall one day be in Your presence, face to face not only with each other but also with You. Bless this desert so that, while it is sweet upon our tongues, we see this as a foretaste of the sweetness to come in Your presence. Amen.

(Those gathered should now begin a conversation about the future. This should be a positive conversation about things to look forward to. It should be a reminder that this pandemic too shall pass. We shall gather again together with joy and a new appreciation for gathering together.)

Closing Prayer
(by all)

Lord God, heavenly Father, be with us in these days. Remind us that these troubles are temporary, and through Christ You will shepherd us through this time. Be with those who are suffering most during this pandemic, and for the sake of Jesus our Lord, heal them according to Your mercy and wisdom. And heal all the afflictions suffered in our bodies, minds and souls; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen.