**MAUNDY THURSDAY**

**9th April**

(Exodus 12:1-4 [5-10], 11-14; Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19;

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 and John 13:1-17, 31b-35)

***Tonight, light a candle and sit together in your family to read these readings***

Today is Maundy Thursday, we should be worshiping and celebrating the **Holy Supper** tonight. Yet, our life as well as the life of people in the whole world is confronting the Covid19. Church buildings are locked, but the hearts of the faithful are widely open: **we are praying more than ever**. Members of our congregation are connected more than ever by thoughts, prayers, telephone calls and social media. We are closer to our God than ever.

The passages we read for today trace the sacred strand that runs between the institution of Passover in the Old Testament, and that of the Holy Communion in the New. Exodus (chapter 12) is about the preparation that God told Moses and Aaron to make before the **Passover**, that moment leading up to the Exodus. From then on, the New Year is now to be counted from this time known as ***Nissan -*** falling in March or April, - to celebrate the time when individuals sharing the faith become a “people”. The Passover itself is given so as to be a day of remembrance, to be celebrated as a “perpetual ordinance”.

The very important theme of ***remembrance*** is rooted in the Hebrew nation and is to be recognised ever afterwards. It carries through Psalm 116, a thanksgiving hymn that, similar to Psalm 30, celebrates the deliverance of God’s people from ***near death*** ***distress***: so sung, “I love the Lord, because he has heard my voice and my supplications (v1)”. We should also sing so, noting that the reason for being rescued is not simply our own survival; it is rather so that we in return may walk before the Lord (v9) and pay our vows to the Lord “in the presence of all his people” (vv14 & 18). Thus, the Psalmist declares – as we ought to do now - that he will lift up the cup of salvation reminding us of a three fold lift: the cup served in the Passover ceremony, the cup of redemption, and that life-giving cup offered by Jesus Christ at the Passover act in the Upper Room.

First Corinthians (chapter 11) is the earliest account we have about the last event. The night of remembrance Jesus reiterated that we no longer simply remember God’s mighty redemption of the old in the Exodus - which the Passover meal symbolised for those who had believed, - but now it is Christ’s present work of redemption in each of our lives as well. The feast of **Passover and the Sacrament of Communion** thus meld to remind us of all God’s work on our behalf, making the Holy Supper (The Lord’s Supper), our worship tonight or prayer an acted sermon until he comes again. The Gospel of Matthew (26: 26-28) and mainly John (chapter 13) remind us of Christ’s own words: that it is an act **perpetuating the faith and symbolising the humility of the service**.

Friends, in this period of suffering from the Corona virus and subsequent confusion due to the lockdown, **let us prove our faith in the Lord who gives us the Hope**. There is nothing greater for Christians than the Hope that Christ alone gives us. Christ is nearer; He reminds us to keep our lamps burning until he comes. Tonight, this act of faith makes a big difference, during a time of turbulence in particular like this. Thus, I wish you all more and **more strength and more faith**, **which brings our Lord nearer**.

Prayer

*May the Lord remain among you (among us all) as one who serves, and may you too come to have a heart like his own. The Lord be with you; His Peace surround you. Amen!*