



before the service begins...

MAUNDY THURSDAY

The Maundy Thursday Liturgy is one of endings and beginnings. What was begun on Ash Wednesday is brought to a close here tonight. What begins tonight does not end until the resurrection of Easter. It is the ancient Triduum, "The Three Sacred Days," which lead us to Easter: Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday with its Vigil of Easter.

The theme tonight is love, our Saviour's love for us, expressed in the washing of the disciples' feet, in giving himself in bread and wine, in dying upon the cross.

An invitation to confession is given. The focus is on absolution. On Ash Wednesday, we began Lent with a major act of confession and ashes, but did not receive absolution. That forgiveness comes now "in the name and by the command of our Lord", at the service celebrating Christ's love. The lessons of love are read. Then an example of love is given, along with a new command.

The new command derives from it: "Love one another."

The prayers are said. The table is made ready. The time of the Lord's Supper arrives, and our Lord is revealed in bread and wine as once he "revealed himself to his disciples."

The peace is shared at this moment in the sacramental presence of Christ. It is a solemn moment, but we cannot linger here. Nor could the Lord. His betrayal was imminent.

Before we know it, the markings of betrayal are seen before us. The symbol of Christ in our midst, the altar, is stripped bare. Christ is stripped of his power and glory.

Good Friday is inescapable. The powers of darkness work upon him.

In silence, we remain before the Blessed Sacrament in the Garden of Repose and leave, when we are ready, in silence.

The Triduum continues with the Good Friday liturgy tomorrow at 2.00p.m.