

Christ Church Freemantle

Maundy Thursday 9th April

MAUNDY THURSDAY

Jesus' loneliness continues and builds. He wants to give his friends something to do that will crystalize and help them to remember all he has been trying to teach them for three years. It has to be something they would do naturally in their daily life, but with a memorable twist to it. And a meal is the obvious answer because we all have to eat every day, and in normal times we do that with others at least sometimes even if we live alone. But the foot washing – that was a shocking twist they would never forget. He shouldn't have done it – it was the job of a servant and should have been done as they all gathered, only this meal was eaten in secret so there was no servant. Well then, one of the disciples should have washed Jesus' feet – after all, he was their leader. But they didn't think of it, and now they were ashamed.



And so Jesus gives them the new commandment, that they should love one another as he loved them. We can't enact the foot washing today but we can love and serve each other by phone calls and prayers until that time when we can all be re-united in the flesh. And then we can party! And we can thank all the doctors and nurses and many other key workers by joining in with applause and banging on saucepans and cheers and by the ships in harbour all sounding their horns as we have done for the last two Thursdays, and as I hope we will continue to do each Thursday at 8.00 pm.

Well, for Judas, all this foot washing and goings on was the last straw and he slunk off with a lame excuse, as Jesus had known he would, to betray him.

And so we find Jesus, knowing that the climax was coming fast, going out with his disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane and taking Peter, James and John, his closest friends, aside to be near him while he prayed. In his loneliness he needed the comfort of their presence keeping watch. And yet they fell asleep just when he needed their support. Luke tells us that in his anguish he sweated great drops of blood and that an angel came and ministered to him.

And so Jesus is arrested and taken off to be tortured and brought before mock trials through the night. He is so very alone. And all for us.

We might want to spend maybe half an hour in silent vigil this evening as we try to stand alongside him. It would be good to use the time also to pray for those who are most alone tonight; spouses unable to be with their partners struggling for life in intensive care, all who have lost loved ones to this virus and cannot have a proper funeral service, and all whose mental health has taken a terrible knock through anxiety and isolation.

And then we need to rest and take care of ourselves.

PREPARING FOR THE TRIDUUM

What's that? you may ask. Well, the Triduum is the three days before Easter: Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday. Gardens are central to this onward flow of story from the Garden of Gethsemane on Maundy Thursday to the tomb of Jesus on Good Friday and then on to the Easter garden on Easter Day.

So why not have a go at making your own? It can be as small and simple as will fit into a supermarket plastic tray that held fruit or veg, all the way through to a bigger one set out on a tea-tray perhaps with small pots around it for flowers, and stones to represent the tomb, and a gravel or shell path. I'm an addicted beachcomber so have pots and tins of shells and pebbles but let your imagination fly. And your own home-made cross can be placed in it too at the appropriate time.

If you don't have access to all that you can still draw or make a collage of a garden perhaps using pictures cut out of a magazine. And you can place the cross you made on Palm Sunday on it. But however you make it, start early in the week to gather all the bits you will need so that you are ready on the day.

Eileen Wetherell