

Agapé Meal on Maundy Thursday

This service was adapted from the Book of Occasional Services and the Maundy Thursday propers for use in private homes during “shelter in place.”

Note: The celebration of festal meals is not appropriate during Holy Week. In Christian tradition such festivities take place only after the Lenten fast has been completed by the celebration of the Great Vigil.

A meatless meal is to be preferred and a Mediterranean style meal is often chosen for Agape Meals, but any foods are fine as long as they are simple. Salads, soups, cheese, fruits and nuts, and simple grains or pastas are good choices. Include a bit of bread and wine/grape juice, according to your diet.

Opening Collect – Before the Meal

The Collect of the Day

Almighty Father, whose dear Son, on the night before he suffered, gave freely of himself to his beloved in the washing of feet and in instituting the Sacrament of his Body and Blood: Mercifully grant that we may remember these great gifts of love by Jesus Christ our Lord, and follow his great command to love one another as he eternally loves us all; who has given himself for the whole world, and who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Then the following blessing is recited at the beginning of the meal over the food:

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe. You have blessed the earth to bring forth food to satisfy our hunger. Let this food strengthen us in the fast that is before us, that following our Savior in the way of the cross, we may come to the joy of his resurrection. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, now and for ever. *Amen.*

During the meal this excerpt from the Gospel of Luke is read.

Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, ‘Go and prepare the Passover meal for us that we may eat it.’ They asked him, ‘Where do you want us to make preparations for it?’ ‘Listen,’ he said to them, ‘when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him into the house he enters and say to the owner of the house, “The teacher asks you, ‘Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ ” He will show you a large room

upstairs, already furnished. Make preparations for us there.’ So they went and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal.

When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. 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 until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.’ Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, ‘Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.’

This blessing is then offered

Blessing Over The Wine

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe. You create the fruit of the vine; and on this night you offered your followers the cup of salvation through the Blood of your Son Jesus Christ. Glory to you for ever and ever. Amen.

People who have wine (or grape juice) take a drink and continue to eat – reserving some bread and wine for the end of the meal.

After a few minutes, the Hebrew scripture is read.

The Second Lesson: Exodus 12:1-14a

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. Tell the whole congregation of Israel that on the tenth of this month they are to take a lamb for each family, a lamb for each household. If a household is too small for a whole lamb, it shall join its closest neighbor in obtaining one; the lamb shall be divided in proportion to the number of people who eat of it. [Your lamb shall be without blemish, a year-old male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembled congregation of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight. They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. They shall eat the lamb that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted over the fire, with its head, legs, and inner organs. You shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn.] This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly. It is the passover of the Lord. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both human beings and animals; on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live: when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance.

The meal continues

At the conclusion of the meal the following blessing is offered

Blessing Over The Bread

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe. You bring forth bread from the earth; and on this night you gave your followers the bread of life in the Body of your Son Jesus Christ. As grain scattered upon the earth is gathered into one loaf, so gather your Church in every place into the kingdom of your Son. To you be glory and power for ever and ever. Amen.

The remaining bread is eaten and the wine or juice are finished.

The Dismissal

Let us bless the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Other suggestions:

You may want to wash your hands prayerfully after the meal, in remembrance of those in need and of Jesus, who washed his disciples' feet on this holy night as a demonstration of the new commandment, to "love one another."

You may want to clear your table and do dishes either in silence or while listening to Psalm 22 (Youtube has a wide selection of chants), symbolic of the stripping of the altar on this night.

Peace be with you!