

Eucharist for Maundy Thursday

This could just have easily been called Passover Eucharist and is particularly suited to a communion service or meal or reflection during Holy week. It attempts to remember the Exodus story and the events of the Passover and weave these together with remembering the events of Holy week and in particular the last meal Jesus shared with the disciples which of course was a celebration of the Jewish Passover. Of course the Passover may have been a time of celebration for the Jewish people but an event that is seen as liberation for some is a horrific tragedy for the Egyptian people who are also remembered here.

After the supper had ended ...

When the chatter and laughter had ebbed away
and the disciples reclined well-fed
and content that the rituals of Passover
had been performed according to custom.

Jesus took a piece of unleavened bread...

Bread made in the rush of escape
bread packed hurriedly into what little could be carried
forced to flee as refugees
for a destination as yet unknown.

and gave thanks and broke it...

A thanksgiving for the miracle of liberation
as Pharaoh gave way, and let the people go
but liberation for some comes at a heavy cost
for the Egyptian people left traumatised and bereaved.

This is my body, broken for you...

Broken on the cross of human suffering
broken on the cross of human war-making
broken on the cross of the human injustice
broken on the cross of human poverty.

Do this in memory of me...

And the disciples remembered the stories Jesus told
the outcasts and sinners he ate with
the suffering people he healed
and the rule-keepers he upset.

Then he took a cup of wine...

Wine of celebration and raucous reunions
extravagant wine saved till last
miraculously replenished at weddings
wine drunk in the festivities of a Passover meal.

This is the new covenant sealed by my blood...

Blood spilt in violence and horror
as the chosen people fled through doorways
daubed with the blood of the sacrificial lamb
as Egypt wakes to the horror of bloodshed and death.

Do this in memory of me...

And we remember the new covenant that Jesus calls us to
the outcasts and sinners we are called to honour
the suffering people we are called to heal
and the rule-keepers we are called to upset.

And so we eat bread and drink wine with Jesus
In confession
In celebration
In remembrance
In love.

[share bread and wine]

And after they left the upper room
they went to walk and talk and pray
in the garden of Gethsemane
and it was dark...

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