

Maundy Thursday
Monday, 1st April 2021



Dear Friends,

'Then the LORD God took soil from the ground and formed a man out of it; he breathed life-giving breath into his nostrils and the man began to live.'
(Genesis 2: 7)

Palm Sunday heralds Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem and marks the beginning of Holy Week. We are reaching the climax of the Church's year as we commemorate what our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, did for us.

Each day of this 'great week,' you will receive a meditation from a member of our Ministry Team. Their thoughts allow us to reflect on this sacred time - remembering what it means for humankind to have allowed God's greatest gift to the world to be betrayed, humiliated, falsely accused and left to die on a cross by those who professed to love Him. It is a time for us to think deeply about where each of us are in this bleak reality of God's created people and our capacity to ignore the weak, the vulnerable and the poor whom Jesus came to liberate.

Today Charlotte Nash, LLM, offers a reflection on Maundy Thursday by Methodist theologian and Alfred Edward Whitham.

Yours, in the Passion of Christ,

Jax

Revd Jax Machin, Rector, The Downs Benefice

Monday in Holy Week - Journeying through Lent **Charlotte Nash, LLM**

The following reading is from A.E. Whitham, a Methodist born in Victorian England. It is rather wonderful.

I was dreaming that I was treading the streets of the Holy City, pottering about like a tourist. In my wandering I came upon the museum of that city of our dream. I went in, and a courteous attendant conducted me round. There was some old armour there, much bruised with battle. Many things were conspicuous by their absence. I saw nothing of Alexander's, nor of Napoleon's. There was no Pope's ring, nor even the ink-bottle that Luther is said to have thrown at the devil, nor Wesley's seal and keys.

I saw a widow's mite and the feather of a little bird. I saw some swaddling clothes, a hammer, and three nails, and a few thorns. I saw a bit of a fishing-net and the broken oar of a boat. I saw a sponge that had once been dipped in vinegar, and a small piece of silver. But I cannot enumerate all I saw, nor describe all I felt.

Whilst I was turning over a common drinking cup, which had a very honourable place, I whispered to the attendant, 'Have you not got a towel and basin among your collection?' 'No,' he replied, 'not here. You see, they are in constant use.' Then I knew I was in Heaven, in the Holy City, and amid the redeemed society.

Knowing that He came from God and went to God..... Jesus took a towel and basin.



'Jesus Washes Feet' by Ladislav Záborský

The Basin and the Towel by Michael Card

In an upstairs room, a parable
Is just about to come alive.
And while they bicker about who's best,
With a painful glance, He'll silently rise.
Their Saviour Servant must show them how
Through the will of the water
And the tenderness of the towel.

And the call is to community,
The impoverished power that sets the soul free.
In humility, to take the vow,
That day after day we must take up the basin and the towel.

In any ordinary place,
On any ordinary day,
The parable can live again
When one will kneel and one will yield.
Our Saviour Servant must show us how
Through the will of the water
And the tenderness of the towel.

And the space between ourselves sometimes
Is more than the distance between the stars.
By the fragile bridge of the Servant's bow
We take up the basin and the towel.

And the call is to community,
The impoverished power that sets the soul free.
In humility, to take the vow,
That day after day
we must take up the basin and the towel.



Today's prayer comes from the beautiful hymn by Richard A M Gillard.

*Brother, sister, let me serve you;
Let me be as Christ to you;
Pray that I might have the grace to
Let you be my servant, too.*

*We are pilgrims on a journey;
and companions on the road;
We are here to help each other
Walk the mile and bear the load.*

*I will hold the Christ-light for you
In the night time of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you,
Speak the peace you long to hear.*

*I will weep when you are weeping;
When you laugh I'll laugh with you;
I will share your joy and sorrow
Till we've seen this journey through.*

*When we sing to God in Heaven
We shall find such harmony,
Born of all we've known together
Of Christ's love and agony.*

*Brother, sister, let me serve you;
Let me be as Christ to you;
Pray that I might have the grace to
Let you be my servant, too.*



'Christ Reasoning with Peter' by Giotto di Bondone