

Come. Celebrate Redemption.

We have been gathered here tonight, in observance of a perpetual ordinance. And though these requirements echo to us from across the ages, we are not just picking up on the past of storied ancestors. No, we are being given instructions in this very moment for our lives now. At first the instructions sound picayune, if not quaint. To our modern and independent ears, details about what to eat, how to cook it and what to wear make the whole thing sound all the more like an ancient tale. But that is our misperception. The mythic markings of the biblical account are reference points, transmitted through time and space, so that we can sense our situation, commit to movement, and be open to going out with the faith that growth will come. On the other hand, stasis is the strategy of the fearful—both the have-nots who are trying to be still so as not to be noticed and the dictators who are demonstrably grasping to keep their power and assert their hold on what they claim as their own. Part of what makes the faithful faithful is the awareness that fear propagates extremes—oppressors and oppressed, rich and poor, dominant and silenced, documented and erased, Pharaohs and pyramid slaves, brokers and broken, vested and vulnerable, Egyptians and Hebrews, model citizens and monitored aliens. These are not echoes from long ago. The scripture is neither archaic inscrutability nor anthropological curiosity. The appointed readings are

poignant clue and indication for our life and times. So tell the whole congregation, there is no time for lots of preparation in the kitchen or lingering at table. You need to pack while the food cooks. Be ready to go. The Exodus has begun; we are going. “Going” is not only about leaving. The Exodus is a movement outwards—a bodily going out that is not about leaving behind but meeting along the way, on the way to the place where we are going.

Our Passover begins tonight with *Christ meeting people where they are*; Christ on his knees. The Exodus movement continues tomorrow—*people meeting Christ where he is*: on the cross. On the third day, the dynamic motion culminates in *people meeting Christ in each other*.

- Christ on his knees, calling us to serve
- Christ on the cross, calling for none other than God
- Christ from beyond the grave, calling each one of us by name

This dynamic movement is the reality of our existence. Triduum, the Three Days, is an opportunity to explore what shapes us and gives us direction. Pascha nostrum—Celebrating Christ our Passover gives us orientation practices in a world where we are so often disoriented.

So we begin, anew, again, tonight, prayerfully centering on how to live Christ’s life in our bodies... how to embody Christ’s living and dying and rising.

This is our bounden duty and service—our responsibility and our worship—such that the work of our daily living and the celebration of Eucharist will become the same thing: we, in and through our bodies, becoming Christ's food and drink with others.

At this meal—his last supper with his friends, our new Passover—the body of Christ is the bread of heaven leavened by the Holy Spirit. At this meal, Christ meets people where they are—hungry and tired. After supper, he gets down on his knees. He who was born in the straw matures in washing away the people's accumulated buildup of grime sticking to the body—not only in the recesses of our hearts but in the creases of our skin; between the toes. Yes, Christ cleanses us and refreshes us, we who are burdened with road-weariness. We know full well that the roads are not paved with gold and that the terrain is uneven. When one least expects it, a twisted ankle or worse could come. But Christ is always here at the door, bidding us to enter in where there are no pat downs, only greetings and embrace; no restrictive guest lists, only good news: There is room, Christ the innkeeper assures you and me.

This door is always open, open wide, for all people. Washing the feet of his friends and strangers too, Christ on his knees is calling us to serve. The door does not close. This meal is not an arrival but a transition, an encampment with the offer of provisions. Have something to drink. Rest. Eat. But remember, the door

is open. You shall eat the New Passover hurriedly. Christ calls us to go back out through the very door we entered in. Having washed our feet, Christ's tender touch upon our vulnerabilities is the balm of peace—a salve that coats and penetrates our skin. We go out, carrying the Peace of Christ in our bodies; and wherever we are sent by God's grace we will imitate our Savior, touching others in remembrance of Christ until he comes.