

Lenten Devotional March 29, 2018

Scripture

Mark 14:12-25

¹²On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed, his disciples said to him, "Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?" ¹³So he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him, ¹⁴and wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks, Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' ¹⁵He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there." ¹⁶So the disciples set out and went to the city, and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal. ¹⁷When it was evening, he came with the twelve. ¹⁸And when they had taken their places and were eating, Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me." ¹⁹They began to be distressed and to say to him one after another, "Surely, not I?" ²⁰He said to them, "It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the bowl with me. ²¹For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born." ²²While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." ²³Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. ²⁴He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. ²⁵Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

Devotional

Dr. Shan Overton, Director of the Center for Writing and Learning Support

In a prayer-poem titled "Meditation," the Polish American poet Czeslaw Milosz writes of a God whose glory it is to wander along with us in our daily lives, to know our faults so intimately, and to approach us with great kindness. The poet prays to God-with-us, "You felt compassion for them, forgiving their mistake, / Their falsity, of which they were aware, pretending they did not know it, / And even their ugliness, as they gathered in their churches." Echoing Mark's Gospel on this Maundy Lenten Devotional Milosz depicts a God who offers gracious compassion despite human duplicity and infidelity. In his institution of the Lord's Supper, Jesus acknowledges to all his friends assembled in the Upper Room that he will be betrayed by one of them; then, he breaks bread and pours wine and shares both in a stunning act of hospitality. His lament of human unfaithfulness and ugliness is paired with his generosity and tenderness. Even as he grapples with the inevitability of his own betrayal and death, this Jesus, our Emmanuel, proffers warmth, food, and friendship in the face of human hunger and failing.

Prayer

Holy God, you know better than we do our faults, our hunger, and our pain. Help us be ever mindful of the generosity and care shown to us by your Son, Jesus Christ, who offered kindness and hospitality when confronted with human unfaithfulness and ugliness. Walk with us as we endeavor to offer compassion to ourselves and others when we are faced with human flaws, falsity, and failings.