



St Peter Chanel & St Joseph Berala

Streams of living water will flow from within. ~John 7:38

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HOLY THURSDAY

1 APRIL 2021

Greater Fellowship and Effective Communion

Passover was originally a nomadic festivity marking the shift from plains to upper lands at the end of winter. The Israelites celebrated this feast while they were in the Sinai desert. On the full moon after the spring equinox in the northern hemisphere, 21 March, a fine lamb was offered to gods so that the rest of the flock would not be harmed. The blood on the door posts were signs that the offering was made. Rituals of this primitive feast was taken by Hebrews to commemorate the exodus from the land of captivity, Egypt, to freedom. It also commemorated the covenant God made with them in the desert of Sinai. In celebrating this feast each year, the blood of the lamb was sprinkled over the altar (representing God) and the people, signifying their union in covenant.



Paul, writing to the Corinthians about a decade after the Last Supper of the Lord, used the symbolism of the Passover to reflect the new covenant sealed by the blood of Jesus. Here the blood is not sprinkled but given to be drunk. The Last Supper of the Lord, as it is re-enacted in Christian gatherings effectively renews the act of dedication and union. Paul also reminds the Christians of Corinth of the seriousness and intent with which the memorial of the Last Supper of the Lord to be celebrated.

John's Gospel particularly, shows what Christian dedication and the union with God means. Being at the service of others is the core character of a disciple of Jesus. Jesus wanted his followers to understand it well. To make his point Jesus, to their amazement, washed the feet of his disciples before his Last Supper. Do you really grasp the importance of living a life of dedication to others? Without such a dedication to service, your effort to join the Body of Christ will be futile. May your dedicated service build up a strong fellowship with each other. Then make the fellowship in the name of Jesus and enter into a union with him.

On this Holy Thursday, I renew my commitment, as your pastor, to greater fellowship and effective Communion with Jesus. I invite you to be with me in this mission.

Blessing of new Fire and Water, and Easter Food

On Easter Saturday, 3 April, at 8 AM there will be Morning Prayer at the church. This is the official prayer of the church and you are welcome to join. After the prayer, Easter Food will be blessed for the families.

At the Vigil service in the evening at 7 PM, new fire will be blessed from which the Easter Candle will be lit. There will also be blessing of water as part of the ceremony. Should you like to take some of the blessed water home, come with a small container.

Celebrate New Catholics

Four of our brothers and sisters will be initiated into the Church at Easter Vigil. Christina Kailahi, Priscilla Mafi, Christopher Hayes and Edwin Kong will be baptised, Confirmed and offered Holy Communion on 3rd April, the Easter Vigil. At the conclusion of the vigil service, all parishioners will be invited to gather in the Jubilee Hall for a light supper in honour of the newly initiated Christians as well as Rosalind Evans who was received into the Church recently. You are welcome to bring slices or finger food to share at the supper.

USE QR CODE TO SIGN IN

For those who do not have a smartphone, you can still sign in using the paper form. But that will be an exception, rather than norm. **It is mandatory to wear face mask in the church.**

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REFLECTIONS ON JOHN 13:1-15

Historical Context – Passover

As we see in the first reading, the Feast of Passover commemorates the rescue of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. God instructed the people to sacrifice a lamb and smear its blood on their doors so that they would be saved from the punishment God unleashed on the Egyptians. Over these days of Easter, we are reminded that Jesus took on the role of the sacrificial lamb. He surrendered himself to death in order to bring about salvation for all people. What would seem to be the lowest point in his life actually becomes his moment of triumph.

Gospel Focus – Eucharist

It is proper that on Holy Thursday we give great emphasis to the mystery and centrality of the Eucharist for Christians. Yet it is an irony that the gospel of John, that provides the gospel passage for this feast, does not include the words of institution. From the writings of Paul (incorporated into the other three gospels) we get the words of blessing and the instruction to 'do this in memory of me'. In this way, Jesus gave new meaning to the Passover meal of remembrance. Now it is the life, death and resurrection of Jesus that we celebrate in the Eucharist.

Living the Gospel – Servant of all

When Jesus washes the feet of his disciples, at one level he is simply observing one of the rules of hospitality. It was an obligation on a host to provide water for guests to wash the dust and dirt from their feet. Jesus goes one step further and actually washes their feet himself – in effect, he assumes the role of a household servant. Small acts of kindness and service for another person honour that person and demonstrate our respect for them. When we perform such acts we are being Christ-like ourselves but we are also acknowledging Christ's presence in the other.

The Lamb that was slain has delivered us from death and given us life

Saint Melito of Sardis (2nd century saint from Turkey)

There was much proclaimed by the prophets about the mystery of the Passover: that mystery is Christ, and to him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

For the sake of suffering humanity he came down from heaven to earth, clothed himself in that humanity in the Virgin's womb, and was born a man. Having then a body capable of suffering, he took the pain of fallen man upon himself; he triumphed over the diseases of soul and body that were its cause, and by his Spirit, which was incapable of dying, he dealt man's destroyer, death, a fatal blow.

He was led forth like a lamb; he was slaughtered like a sheep. He ransomed us from our servitude to the world, as he had ransomed Israel from the hand of Egypt; he freed us from our slavery to the devil, as he had freed Israel from the hand of Pharaoh. He sealed our souls with his own Spirit, and the members of our body with his own blood.

He is the One who covered death with shame and cast the devil into mourning, as Moses cast Pharaoh into mourning. He is the One who smote sin and robbed iniquity of offspring, as Moses robbed the Egyptians of their offspring. He is the One who brought us out of slavery into freedom, out of darkness into light, out of death into life, out of tyranny into an eternal kingdom; who made us a new priesthood, a people chosen to be his own for ever. He is the Passover that is our salvation.

It is he who endured every kind of suffering in all those who foreshadowed him. In Abel he was slain, in Isaac bound, in Jacob exiled, in Joseph sold, in Moses exposed to die. He was sacrificed in the Passover lamb, persecuted in David, dishonoured in the prophets.

It is he who was made man of the Virgin, he who was hung on the tree; it is he who was buried in the earth, raised from the dead, and taken up to the heights of heaven. He is the mute lamb, the slain lamb, the lamb born of Mary, the fair ewe. He was seized from the flock, dragged off to be slaughtered, sacrificed in the evening, and buried at night. On the tree no bone of his was broken; in the earth his body knew no decay. He is the One who rose from the dead, and who raised man from the depths of the tomb.

Good Friday Collection

On Good Friday afternoon, at the veneration of Cross, you will have opportunity to make a donation towards Holy Land. **Please use the specially marked envelopes available at the church foyer.** The collection taken on Good Friday will be sent to the Holy Land Commiserate to help maintain the churches and premises of Holy Land.