

Sermon
Maundy Thursday
St. Andrew's, Methuen
April 14, 2022
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Exodus 12:1-4, (5-10), 11-14
1 Corinthians 11:23-26
John 13:1-17, 31b-35
Psalm 116:1, 10-17

Two thousand years ago two things happened on this night that are changing the world. Beatrice Bruteau calls it the "Holy Thursday Revolution". See her extraordinary books, [Radical Optimism: Rooting Ourselves in Reality](#) and [The Grand Option: Personal Transformation and a New Creation](#)

On this night, Jesus undermines the central paradigm of the world which we have been living since the beginning of time. It is **the paradigm of domination**, which views the world as filled with people different from us and who thereby threaten us.

Remember high school where survival depends on finding a group of like-minded kids, who give us our identity and who protect us against the other groups. In my high school the cool kids had more power and influence than did those of us in the band.

When we see ourselves as separated and alienated from each other, the domination paradigm helps create order and security.

Right now, Vladimir Putin is seeking to move his Russian Group up the ladder of domination by driving the NATO countries down the ladder by waging an immoral war in Ukraine.

But on Holy Thursday, Jesus undoes the domination paradigm by washing his disciples' feet. The master takes the role of the servant. Jesus is not just showing his humility, but more than this, he is showing us another way to see the world.

But Peter says, "No way am I letting Jesus wash my feet".

Of course, Peter would gladly let Asian women give him a pedicure, because that's within the natural hierarchy of the Domination Paradigm.

The reason we resist taking part in the foot washing on this night in church is precisely **because it goes against the order of things in which people like us do not wash feet or have feet washed by people like us.**

But Jesus says something profound is on the line here: "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me."

He goes on to say, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord--and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your

Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you."

Of course, what Jesus is doing is much more than teaching us to be humble, **rather he is destroying the categories of the domination paradigm when he destroys the categories of master and servant.**

As he says two chapters later: "I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends...."

Peter can have a share in what Jesus is doing, only if Peter is willing to drop his allegiance to the domination paradigm.

But if we give up the domination paradigm what takes its place? it is the **Communion Paradigm**. Whereas the Domination Paradigm is built on the metaphysics of alienation, the communion paradigm is built on the metaphysics of mutual indwelling:

In John 17 Jesus puts it this way:

"Father, the glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one."

He performs the Communion Paradigm at table when he says **“take, eat, this is my body, this is my blood, given for you.”**

In the sacred meal, Jesus is indwelling us, and we are right to receive the sacrament of his body and blood **as his life flowing into our life.**

But there is much more!

Imagine this: we are sitting around the table with Jesus and he takes the bread and breaks it and turns to John and says “Take, eat, this is my Body given for you.”

And now John takes the bread and hands it to Peter and says, **“Take, eat, this is my Body given for you.”**

And if Peter wants to join in this Holy Communion he takes the bread and passes it to Mary Magdalene and says, “Take, eat, this is my body given for you.”

And then Mary Magdalene takes the bread and hands it to you and says, “Take, eat, this my Body given for you.”

Now she is offering her very life which comes from Christ to you—to feed, sustain, transform you for your journey.

And then it is up to you to take the bread and pass it to the person next to you and say, Take, eat, this is my body given for you.”

If all we do after receiving the Body and Blood of Jesus is keep it to ourselves, we have short circuited the whole process of Holy Communion.

First, we receive Christ's life in us, so that—so that—we can share that Christ living in us with our neighbor—whoever they are: slave or free, male or female, Jew or Greek, friend or enemy.

This is the Holy Thursday Revolution.

But we're Episcopalians—we don't believe in revolution; we believe in doing things decently and in order! Taking my private piece of Jesus and keeping it to myself.

Yet, here we are: Called to join the Revolution that radically changes how we see the world.

The Revolution fills us with the love and life of Christ so that Christ can continue changing the world through us.