

Saint Thomas and Saint Thomas of the Air Church  
Maundy Thursday  
March 28, 2024  
rmcneely+

Do this in remembrance of Me

Everything had gone wonderfully on Sunday  
Large crowds greeted Him  
Welcomed Him  
Praised Him  
There were shouts of “Hosannah in the Highest”  
“Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord”

Zechariah’s 800 year of prophecy was fulfilled.  
“Rejoice greatly o daughter of Jerusalem  
behold; Thy King cometh unto thee  
He is just and having salvation  
Lowly and riding upon an ass and upon a colt, the foal of an  
ass” Zechariah 9:9

The people saw the prophecy in Jesus and were overwhelmed.

It could not have been a better beginning  
It looked very much like Jesus would be followed  
By 10s of thousands  
What a beginning.

But then things took an unexpected turn.

Where some thought He would rid Jerusalem of the Romans  
Instead, Jesus got off the donkey  
And stormed the courtyard of the Temple  
Throwing over the tables of the money changers  
And shouting:

“My Father’s house  
was to be a house of prayer  
and you have made it into a den of thieves”.

The Temple guards were looking everywhere for Jesus  
What were the Pharisees and Sadducees planning?

What had changed?  
Where were the throngs that shouted “Hosannah”?  
And strewed their garments and palm branches in the way?

On Thursday night He assembled them in an upper room  
Mark Thomas’s upper room according to legend  
And He did that thing with the bread and wine.  
He washed their feet and said; to lead was to serve.  
And they saw He was a servant  
All the years they had known Him  
He had served them and had served the people.

He gave them a long talk  
-sounded as though He was leaving them.

But back to the bread and the wine  
He took what was there  
Gave thanks  
He break it  
And gave it to His disciples

Wait,  
He’d done the same thing two times before  
on a grand scale  
When He fed the 5,000 and then the 4,000

But there was something ancient in what He did.

Some vague, musty story, just beyond the mist of memory  
Abraham, the Old Testament, Genesis

Who was it now, oh yes

I remember,

It was the mysterious single appearance in the Bible  
Of Melchizedek, a priest and King of Salem (Peace).

Abraham had just returned in victory

And Melchizedek blessed bread and wine

And in a ceremony at the altar

Gave it to them.

As He so often did, Jesus had reached back into the Old Testament  
connected with the past

and brought it to the present.

Showed us something that had been there all along

He almost commanded:

Do this is remembrance of Me.

Re-membrance;

He was saying that we could recall Him to our memory

By the bread and the wine?

But was there something more

Something deeper.

Re-membrance;

Re-member.

Almost like to member was a verb, something we do.

Can we bring things back together

Put the members of something back together?

Can we put ourselves back together with Jesus?

Is that how He said we could Re-member Him?

That night in the upper room  
 He told them the bread was His body  
 The wine was His blood.

When He said “Do this in remembrance of Me”  
 Was He telling us that when we consumed the Bread, His body  
 And we drank the wine, His blood  
 That we put the members back together  
 We become part of Him and He becomes part of us?

That we are spiritually transported to that Upper Room?

Christians have been doing so for almost 2000 years.  
 Re-uniting or re-membering ourselves with Him  
 In the gift He gave us in that upper room that night.  
 In the Holy Communion  
 The sacrament that Jesus gave us that night.

We of the Anglican Province of Christ, the King  
 Are truly blessed  
 With a liturgy that is ancient  
 That was first written and said in our language  
 Almost 475 years ago.

And despite the ravages of time  
 and secularism  
 and the devil  
 It has survived intact.

And we consecrate bread and wine into His Body and Blood  
 With the very words He used and gave us that night.

And we come together on a Thursday evening  
 7,500 miles and 20 centuries later  
 to commemorate  
 And to mark the importance of that night  
 And all it means to us and to all Christendom.

Jesus saved it for last  
For the last night He would be with them.  
There were many things to be accomplished that last night  
In the upper room.  
All of them important.  
Holy Communion, the intimate close union with God  
Was the most enduring.  
Was the most powerful  
Was the most comforting.

And it the last of the two sacraments Jesus gave us  
That were necessary for our eternal salvation.  
Baptism and Communion.

Jesus told them “Do This”  
And they did.  
And we do, to this day.

We name this night Maundy  
An Anglicized word based upon the Latin “mandatum”.  
From which we also get the words, “mandate, command”

And so as Christians have for almost 2000 years  
We obey the command in a few minutes  
And enter the sanctuary  
To Receive Him  
In Communion

And for a brief moment  
Eternity is transfixed in time  
And we join with Him  
We are re-membered with Him

It is an intimate, peaceful and powerful moment  
As we dwell in Him and He is us.

We become one  
as we obey the mandatum:  
Do This.