

HOLY THURSDAY
Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper
Year A-B-C

This reading is the story of the Passover. It is powerful, dramatic, and insistent. You, as lector, need to proclaim with the idea that you are relating a fundamental story of our culture. In addition to the edicts of Moses regarding the how and where of the Passover meal there is the urgency of God's promise to guard the Israelites from harm on this night. There are a number of pauses that you need to recognize in order to point out the significance of this story. TAKE YOUR TIME! The tone shifts from the insistence on observing the "rules" in the first, and longer part, to God's promise in the second, shorter, part. Make sure your listeners can hear this shift!

Reading 1

Citation: Exodus, Chap. 12, Verses 1-8, 11-14
Exodus 12: 1-8,11-14

A reading from the Book of Exodus

The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, (very short pause)

"This month shall stand at the head of your calendar;
you shall reckon it the first month of the year. (very short pause)

Tell the whole community of Israel: (insistent) (very short pause)

On the tenth of this month
every one of your families must procure for itself a lamb,
one apiece for each household. (short pause)

If a family is too small for a whole lamb, (upbeat!)

it shall join the nearest household in procuring one
and shall share in the lamb (almost parenthetical)
in proportion to the number of persons who partake of it. (parenthetical) (short pause)

The lamb must be a year-old male (upbeat, again)
and without blemish.

You may take it from either the sheep or the goats. (parenthetical ?) (short pause)

You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month,
and then, (upbeat, once more)

with the whole assembly of Israel present, (NOT parenthetical!)
it shall be slaughtered during the evening twilight. (very short pause)

They shall take some of its blood (insisting)

and apply it to the two doorposts
and the lintel of every house in which they partake of the lamb. (short pause)

That same night (cautionary ?)

they shall eat its roasted flesh
with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. (short pause)

Proclamation Format

"This is how you are to eat it:
with your loins girt,
sandals on your feet
and your staff in hand,

you shall eat like those who are in flight.

It is the Passover of the LORD.

For on this same night
I will go through Egypt,
striking down every firstborn of the land,
both man and beast,
and executing judgment on all the gods of Egypt –
I,
the LORD!

But the blood will mark the houses where you are.

Seeing the blood,
I will pass over you;
thus,
when I strike the land of Egypt,
no destructive blow will come upon you.

"This day shall be a memorial feast for you,
which all your generations shall celebrate
with pilgrimage to the LORD, as a perpetual institution."

The word of the Lord.

(Very serious)

(almost staccato

(“

(very short pause)

(insist; a bit of fear in voice)

(a serious announcement!)

(a warning!)

(what does God sound like?)

(emphasize “striking” & “down”)

(almost parenthetical)

(definite! final! authoritative!)

”

(voice goes down but very FIRM)

(“Thank God” !!!!)

(almost kind)

(almost gentle)

(God’s a bit angry ?)

(assurance !)

(joy !?)

(disregard comma) (finality)

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Paul describes the institution of the Eucharist. YOU ARE NOT THE PRIEST here. You are relating the description of the event – telling the story. That said, there is much emotion, here. Paul portrays Jesus as both humble and triumphant. The triumph is the more important emotion. Be Paul!

Reading 2

Citation: 1 Corinthians, Chap. 11, Verses 23-26
1 Corinthians 11: 23-26

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians

Brothers and sisters:	(serious; pay attention!)
I received from the Lord what I <u>also</u> handed on to you,	(very short pause)
that the Lord Jesus,	(very short pause)
on the night he was handed over,	(almost parenthetical)
took bread,	
and,	
after he had given thanks,	(almost parenthetical)
broke it and said,	(very short pause)
" <u>This</u> is my body	(gentle but FIRM!)
that is for <u>you</u> .	(very short pause)
in remembrance of me."	(a sense of humble finality ?)
In the same way also the cup,	
<u>after</u> supper,	(parenthetical)
saying,	(very short pause)
"This cup is the <u>new</u> covenant	
in my <u>blood</u> .	(very short pause)
Do this,	(an order?)
as often as you drink it,	(almost parenthetical)
in remembrance of me."	(Pause)
For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup,	(St. Paul speaking)
you <u>proclaim</u> the death of the Lord	
until he comes.	(Finality; triumph)

The word of the Lord.

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The story of Jesus washing the feet of the Apostles. Its intent is to remind us that we, too, must be “servant” to our fellow men and women. Peter reflects the skeptic in us – bring this out – with doubt (and then excited, but ignorant, eagerness)! Jesus is quiet, ever the firm but patient teacher with his followers. Do not be too pious or gentle when you speak Jesus’ lines; be Him as Teacher.

GOSPEL

Citation: John, Chap. 13, Verses 1-15
John 13: 1-15

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

Before the feast of Passover, (storyteller setting the stage)
Jesus knew that his hour had come to pass from this world to the Father.

He loved his own in the world (slightly slower pace)
and he loved them to the end.

The devil had already induced Judas, (parenthetical)
son of Simon the Iscariot, (very short pause)
to hand him over.

So, (almost parenthetical)
during supper, (very short pause)
fully aware that the Father had put everything into his power
and that he had come from God and was returning to God,
he rose from supper and took off his outer garments.

He took a towel and tied it around his waist. (four separate statements)
Then he poured water into a basin (“
and began to wash the disciples' feet (“
and dry them with the towel around his waist. (“

He came to Simon Peter,
who said to him,
"Master, are you going to wash my feet?" (can't believe it!)

Jesus answered and said to him,
"What I am doing, you do not understand now, (gentle)
but you will understand later." (reassuring)

Peter said to him,
"You will never wash my feet." (insistent!)

Jesus answered him,
"Unless I wash you, you will have no inheritance with me." (slightly louder)

Simon Peter said to him,
"Master, then not only my feet,

Proclamation Format

but my hands and head as well."

(almost remorseful)

Jesus said to him,
"Whoever has bathed has no need except to have his feet washed,
for he is clean all over;
so you are clean,

but not all."

(almost under your breath)
(parenthetical)

For he knew who would betray him;
for this reason, he said,
"Not all of you are clean."

(almost a whisper?)

So when he had washed their feet
and put his garments back on and reclined at table again,
he said to them,

(parenthetical)

"Do you realize what I have done for you?
You call me 'teacher' and 'master,'
and rightly so,
for indeed I am.

(NOT pleading)

If I, therefore,

(very short pause)

the master and teacher,
have washed your feet,
you ought to wash one another's feet.

(very short pause)

I have given you a model to follow,
so that as I have done for you,
you should also do."

The Gospel of the Lord.