

LENTEN FAITH SHARING

Week Four

Week Four – Matthew 26:17-29

“Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” Matt. 26: 27-28



Begin with **Centering Prayer**.

Sit comfortably with eyes closed.

Begin to slowly breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth.

As you slowly breathe in, image God breathing breath into your center.

As you breathe out through your mouth, let it be a moment of letting go of your anxieties, worries, anger, hatred, frustrations.

Repeat this practice several times.

1. Choose a Sacred Word or Mantra as a symbol of your intention to consent to God’s presence and action within.

Whenever you become aware of distractions, sounds, thoughts of other things, simply return to the Lord with Centering or your prayer word/s.

(Repeat this exercise three to four times, trusting that you are sitting in God’s Holy presence by yourself and with your Share group)

While sitting in silence, open your life to become aware of the presence of God with you personally and with the Share Group.

Ask God to Abide in you and lead your heart to abide in Him.

2. **Lectio Divina** – Choose a Reader. [The Leader leads the Lectio Divina](#)

Read **Matthew 26: 17-29** slowly, while pausing between paragraphs for silence.

Invite participants to rest in silence for a few moments.

Invite them to savor a word, a phrase or a feeling that rises in them. Reflect on this quietly. The Leader, after some time of silence can invite participants to share this **word** or phrase aloud.

The Reading is slowly read a second time by the Reader.

Pause for silent reflection.

The leader invites participants to share their experience using the Reflection commentary.

COMMENTARY

The account of the Lord's Supper as found in Matthew's Gospel closely follows that of Mark's. Jesus identifies the bread that is broken at the Passover meal as that of his own body. Likewise, he identifies the cup of wine with his very blood poured out for many. In verse 28, Matthew adds to Mark's version the words: "for the forgiveness of sins." For Matthew, the forgiveness of sins is the primary purpose for the death of Jesus. It is also the sacramental offering of his blood in the Eucharist. When the disciples drink of the cup, they are participating in his "blood of the new covenant." They are uniting themselves with Jesus the Christ's sacrificial forgiveness of others and through this their own sins are forgiven. Matthew's Gospel wants to emphasize and help his readers understand that Christ's sacrifice was for the forgiveness of sins. It is in this spirit of forgiveness of one another that the disciples of Jesus should celebrate the Eucharist.

The blood of the old covenant is recalled when Jesus holds up the cup before his disciples, remembering the ancient covenant of God revealing to Moses, that blood on the altar was sacred for atonement for their lives. The blood of animals was offered to God in atonement for the sins of humans. The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, sacramentally made present in the Eucharist was a personal act of mercy. It was in keeping with the word of the prophet Hosea: 6:6 "For it is loyalty that I desire not sacrifice, and knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings." Clearly, God desires a personal response rather than the offering of an animal as victim.

Jesus, himself, becomes the Suffering Servant foretold by the Prophet Isaiah: "...But he was pierced for our sins, crushed for our iniquity. He bore the punishment that makes us whole, by his wounds we were healed." Isaiah 53: 5.

Reflection responses

1. What in the reading stirred your heart?
2. Does this Scripture story take on meaning for your life?
3. Did the story help you make connections to the Eucharist?
4. What did you find enlightening?
5. We heard it said.: "that God desire mercy and not sacrifice". What does the self-offering of Jesus call you to do?
6. Does this Gospel message challenge you to forgive before receiving the Eucharist?

Action – Connect with the disconnected.

How or what will you do to share your experience of Eucharist through the Scriptures and worship with someone who is not participating in the Eucharist?

Can you gently and lovingly, and without judgment, ask another what prevents them from coming to experience the Eucharist?

Listen! Listen! Listen! The Holy Spirit will provide the words you should speak.

Matthew 26: 17 - 29

17 On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples approached Jesus and said, "Where do you want us to prepare for you to eat the Passover?"

18 He said, "Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, 'The teacher says, "My appointed time draws near; in your house I shall celebrate the Passover with my disciples."'"

19 The disciples then did as Jesus had ordered, and prepared the Passover.

20 When it was evening, he reclined at table with the Twelve.

21 And while they were eating, he said, "Amen, I say to you, one of you will betray me."

22 Deeply distressed at this, they began to say to him one after another, "Surely it is not I, Lord?"

23 He said in reply, "He who has dipped his hand into the dish with me is the one who will betray me.

24 The Son of Man indeed goes, as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. It would be better for that man if he had never been born."

25 Then Judas, his betrayer, said in reply, "Surely it is not I, Rabbi?" He answered, "You have said so."

26 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and giving it to his disciples said, "Take and eat; this is my body."

27 Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you,

28 for this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins.

29 I tell you, from now on I shall not drink this fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it with you new in the kingdom of my Father."