

Holy Thursday Prayer for Families 2021

Acknowledgment of Land, Seas, Skies and Waterways

Think about the place you were born. If you were born in Australia, do you know the name of the First Nations people of that place? Bring to mind the land, seas, waterways and skies that have grown you up, taught you, sustained and protected you. Now, bring to mind the First Nations peoples of the land, seas, skies and waterways of the place that you are gathered now. If you don't know the name of the First Nations peoples of your past or your present, spend some time today to learn about the traditional owners of these spaces.

Context

Holy Thursday is the beginning of the shortest Liturgical season on the Catholic Calendar the sacred Triduum: 3 days of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday. Today, Catholic around the world normally wash the feet of 12 people, representing the 12 disciples at the Last Supper. Over the years, this tradition has changed as we have come to understand more fully the types and numbers of people who likely gathered with Jesus in the upper room and later on his journey to the cross.

Scripture: Washing of the Feet

John 13:1-15

Before the feast of Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to pass from this world to the Father. He loved his own in the world and he loved them to the end. The devil had already induced Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot, to hand him over. So, during supper, 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. 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?" Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing, you do not understand now, but you will understand later." Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "Unless I wash you, you will have no inheritance with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Master, then not only my feet, but my hands and head as well."

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." For he knew who would betray him; for this reason, he said, "Not all of you are clean." So when he had washed their feet and put his garments back on and reclined at table again, he said to them, "Do you realize what I have done for you? You call me 'teacher' and 'master,' and rightly so, for indeed I am. If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do."

After the feet washing, the meal and conversation, Jesus walked to the Garden of Gethsemane

Rachel McLean – Leader Formation, Cairns Education Services

The Triduum is such a full and rich time in our Church's liturgical year that we often overlook the narratives surrounding the Gospels that we hear in the 3 Masses: Holy Thursday; Good Friday; and Easter Sunday. This Holy Thursday, you might like to consider one of the 3 chapters of the Gospel according to John that follow today's washing of the feet. This year, I am going to ponder the first line of the Passion that we will hear tomorrow: *"Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kedron Valles. There was a garden there, and he went into it with his disciples...Jesus had often met his disciples there..."*

As we began Holy Week on Passion or Palm Sunday, our journey through the desert, on top of mountains and by the Sea of Galilee ends and we move with the gospels to the thriving metropolis of Jerusalem. Here, in the busyness of Passover and the impending death and resurrection of Jesus, we encounter stillness and connection to land in the Garden of Gethsemane.



Figure 1 Garden of Gethsemane R McLean 2016

This year, the Cairns Catholic Education Community has committed to making links to Relationally Responsive Pedagogies through our *Encounter* - Catholic Identity Framework. The natural synergy of the ancient ways of Knowings

of the First Nations people with the more recent Christian invitation into right relationship with others and the world is profound.

Each time we Acknowledge Country, Seas, Skies and Waterways of the First Nations peoples of our region, we recognize not only the deep connection of First Nations peoples to these physical spaces, but also the spiritual connection to all living things within these spaces: trees, animals, flowers, birds and water-dwelling beings. When we use Relationally Responsive Pedagogies, we call this process of connecting with country (and space) Land links. The First Nations peoples in Australia have been making Land Links for millennia. Jesus too invites us to make Land links in our prayer and rituals.

Perhaps, while walking through your gardens you might imagine the many visits Jesus made with his friends to the olive grove at Gethsemane. Why not feel the presence of ancient wisdom found in the trees, birds, animals and insects. You could marvel at the knowledge that is given by the moon, sun, wind and rain for those who follow their ways to find food, shelter and healing.

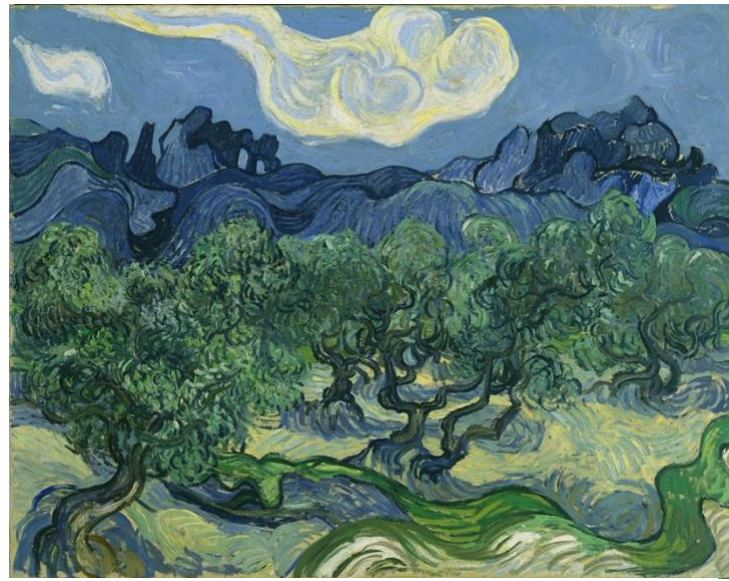


Figure 2 Olive Trees ([Van Gogh series](#))

During this Easter Triduum, as the world continues to respond to Covid-19 and devastating natural disasters, let us find ways to 'be in the garden'. Let us commit to being more responsible for our Common home and tend a global garden where we can all find solace, even in our loneliest and most challenging of times.

Rachel McLean

Leader Formation

Prayer

Just before tomorrow's Passion, John invites us to abide in God's love (John 15:9-17). Today, let us remember the times Jesus and his friends spent in the Garden of Gethsemane 'restoring their souls' and 'filling their cups.' The Jesuit, [Teilhard de Chardin](#), offers a prayer of glorious love; a love that God poured out into the world through the life and death of Jesus. Perhaps you could pray this today in a place and space that brings you joy:

"Glorious Christ, you whose divine influence is active at the very heart of matter, and at the dazzling centre where the innumerable fibres of the multiple meet:
you whose power is as implacable as the world and as warm as life...
you whose hands imprison the stars;
you are the first and the last, the
the living and the dead and the risen again;
it is to you to whom our being cries out a desire as vast as the universe:
in truth you are our Lord and our God! Amen."

Resources

- Check out this [article](#) by [Stephanie Saldana](#), an author and researcher who wrote [Bread of Angels](#), as she explores what the Garden of Gethsemane meant to Jesus and now to her.
- Have a go at practicing a meditation through [Art on Holy Thursday](#)
- Explore how Pope Francis is changing our understanding of the Washing of the Feet at [Australian Catholics here](#).