Meditation for Holy Week with readings and reflections from Sr Marie 8th April 2020 (Fi Jenvey, narrator).

This reflection and meditation can be done without the Youtube video (recommend the use of Youtube if you can). For those who struggle with hearing, the text below can also be used to support the video. Our Youtube presentation is an invitation to spiritually join regular meditators at Wisdom Centre (presently isolated and meditating in their own homes). The tradition we meditate in is Centering Prayer which is fully inclusive of all traditions of Christian Meditation and welcoming of World Traditions.

The text is on the screen with narration. Music and a count down timer are part of the presentation. For technical reasons, the reflection has some disruption to the sound quality. To overcome this, a transcript is below.

Begins with usual opening prayers and introductions (Audio Visual or follow using text below)

Welcome to Christian Meditation in the Centering Prayer Tradition with Fi Jenvey (narrating for Sr Marie).

Opening Prayer: Through Jesus Christ, by the Spirit, by whose breath our souls are raised to life. We, in meditation in this time of crisis pray with all others, as one community and one world to One God, we unite with our brothers and sisters of all world traditions.

With God are Wisdom and understanding. May our ears be attentive, may the meditation of our hearts be for understanding. Through Christ, may we seek and find you, acting only according to Your will. May we follow His teaching, also seeking, the wisdom of the Holy Fathers and Mothers. May we commit to love of earth, faithfulness, community, stability, peace and justice making.

Letting go of all else, in contemplation we surrender in love to you. Let our sacred word be a symbol of our consent to your loving presence and healing. May we be faithful to this word so that it rises in our hearts, awakening that sense of Your presence. **Amen**

A Reflection from Sr Marie:

Like many organisations we have had to cancel or postpone many events because of Covid-19. In our programme for this year at Wisdom Centre, we had planned to have a Passover Meal to celebrate this Jewish festival. The Passover is the base of the present Holy Thursday liturgy. In fact many of us had already booked a place at this special meal. Circumstances made us forfeit this so instead Sr Marie offers some reflections, using some of the readings that had been prepared for this event, along with her own thoughts on how these readings to help us reflect on the Covid-19 pandemic.

Scripture Reading from John, Chapter 13:1-15 (NRSV)

"Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you." For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean."

After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "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."(Short pause in silence)

Sr Marie shares a reflection entitled God in an Apron by Macrina Wiederkehr OP, her favourite spiritual author.

God in an Apron

"Supper was special that night. There was both a heaviness and a holiness hanging in the air. We couldn't explain the mood. It was sacred, yet sorrowful. Gathered around that table eating that solemn, holy meal seemed to us the most important meal we had ever sat down to eat.

We were dwelling in the heart of mystery. Though dark the night Hope felt right as if something evil was about to be conquered. And then suddenly the One we loved startled us all. He got up from the table and put on an apron. Can you imagine how we felt? God in an apron!

Tenderness encircled us as He bowed before us. He knelt and said,

'I choose to wash your feet because I love you.'

God in an apron, kneeling. I couldn't believe my eyes.

I was embarrassed until his eyes met mine. I sensed my value then.

He touched my feet. He held them in his strong, brown hands. He washed them. I can still feel the water. I can still feel the touch of his hands. I can still see the look in his eyes. Then

he handed me the towel and said, 'As I have done so you must do.' Learn to bow. Learn to kneel.

Let your tenderness encircle everyone you meet. Wash their feet not because you have to, but because you want to. It seems I've stood two thousand years holding the towel in my hands, 'As I have done, so you must do,' keeps echoing in my heart. 'There are so many feet to wash', I keep saying. 'No,' I hear God's voice resounding through the years, 'there are only my feet. What you do for them you do for me.'" Macrina Wiederkehr

Marie shares her reflection on Wiederker's reading for today's World situation.

"Supper for humanity is special tonight. These days, all suppers are special. There is both a HEAVINESS, shown by lack of equipment, starving people, loss of jobs, people dying….and a HOLINESS, shown by people's efforts to cooperate, to go the extra mile, to be patient, to thank, to work together; both heaviness and holiness are hanging in the air. The mood, it is both SACRED, yet SORROWFUL. Gathered around this table, the table of humanity is everyone. Each person is there with equal dignity regardless of culture, religion, financial status, type of work…. Eating that solemn, holy meal seems to me the most important meal we have ever sat down to eat.

We are dwelling in the heart of mystery. Though dark the night Hope feels right as if something evil is about to be conquered. And then suddenly the One we love startles us all. The Nurse, doctor, pharmacy worker, ambulance driver, carer, shop assistant… get up from the table and put on an apron. Can you imagine how we feel? God, is seen through my brother and sister, in an apron! Tenderness encircles us as they bow before us. They kneel and say:

'I choose to wash your feet, I choose to work tirelessly, I choose to put my life on the line, I choose to think positively, I choose to follow the government instructions.. BECAUSE I LOVE YOU.' God in an apron, kneeling. I can't believe my eyes.

I am embarrassed until their eyes met mine: at the door, in the community, on the phone, in my emails... I sense my value then.

They metaphorically touch my feet and they really touch my heart. They hold my feet in their strong, brown hands. They wash them. I can still feel the water. I can still feel the touch of their hands. I can still see the look in their eyes: of love, of compassion, of sorrow, of forgiveness. Then they hand me the towel and say, 'As we have done so you must do.' Learn to bow. Learn to kneel.

Let your tenderness encircle everyone you meet as you communicate through the phone, say your thanks on the doorstep, online courtesies through the mass media…. Wash their feet not because you have to, but because you want to. I'm standing holding the towel in my hands, 'As I have done so you must do,' keeps echoing in my heart. 'There are so many feet to wash', I keep saying. 'No,' I hear God's voice resounding, 'there are only my feet. What you do for them you do for me.'"

Bell Sounds…

20-minute meditations begins…Count down timer starts

Bell Sounds…Meditation ends

Final reflection

Blessing Our World Now –John O'Donohue (Blessings)

"Sometimes when we look out, the world seems so dark. War, violence, pandemics, forest fires… and misery seem to abound. This makes us anxious and helpless. What can I do in my private little corner of life that could have any effect on the march of world events? The usual answer is nothing. We then decide to do what we can for our own, and leave the great events to their domain. Thus we opt out and join the largest majority in the world, those who acquiesce. Believing ourselves to be helpless, we hand over all our power to forces and systems outside us that then act in our names, …….. We live in times when the call to full and critically aware citizenship could not be more urgent. We need to rediscover the careless courage, yet devastating simplicity of the little boy who in the middle of the numbed multitude in naïve Socratic fashion, blurts out "But the emperor has no clothes." When spoken, the word of truth can bring down citadels of falsity.

Real presence is the ideal of all true individuation. When we yield to helplessness, we strengthen the hand of those who would destroy. When we choose indifference, we betray our world. Yet the world is not decided by action alone. It is decided more by consciousness and spirit: they are the secret sources of all action and behaviour. The spirit of a time is an incredibly subtle, yet hugely powerful force. And it is comprised of the mentality and spirit of all individuals together. Therefore, the way you look at things is not simply a private matter. Your outlook actually and concretely affects what goes on. When you give in to helplessness you collude with despair and add to it. When you take back your power and choose to see the possibilities for healing and transformation, your creativity awakens and flows to become an active force of renewal and encouragement in the world. In this way, even in your own hidden life you can become a powerful agent of transformation in a broken, darkened world. There is a huge force field that opens when intention focuses and directs itself towards transformation.

Ends with usual closing prayers: Through Jesus Christ, by the Spirit, by whose breath our souls are raised to life, we in meditation in this time of crisis pray with all others, as one community and one world to One God, we unite with our brothers and sisters around the world. Moments of your personal prayer follow**…Amen**

Thank you for meditating with us, please join us again soon

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