

(uplifting organ music) (gentle organ music) (dramatic organ music) (somber organ music) (coughing)
(uplifting organ music) (choir singing in unison)

- Please be seated. (shuffling) Lord God, in a wonderful sacrament, you have left us a memorial of your suffering and death. May the sacrament of your body and blood so work in us that the way we live will proclaim the redemption you have brought. For you live and reign with the father and the holy spirit, one God, now and forever. Will you join me in the callout? And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and the people love darkness rather than light. God is light, in whom there is no darkness at all. For God sent the son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light. Come, let us worship in spirit and in truth. Oh God, you who didst command the light to shine out of the darkness, shine into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of your glory in the face of Jesus Christ, amen. Will you please stand for the reading of the gospel? The gospel lesson is taken from the Book of John, the 15th chapter, the 12th verse. This is my commandment, that you love one another, even as I have loved you.

- Michael Coist writes, "Every Christian is born "in order to reveal love." Jesus says, "A new commandment I give to you, "that you love one another, even as I have loved you, "that you love one another." But this new commandment, as is true of many of the teachings of Jesus, is based on an old commandment found in Leviticus 19:18, which reads, "you shall love your neighbor as yourself." The new is based on the old, but is radically different from the old. The old said, "love your neighbor as yourself." The new says, "love one another, "not as you love yourself, but as I have loved you." Love one another, love our neighbor, love each other, love somebody close to you, love other people, love even your enemies, as Christ loves us. Not as you love yourself, but as God in Christ has loved us. Without condemnation of any person, without partiality shown among any of the children of God, without condescension or arrogance toward others, without fear of being accused of loving the unacceptable, the unlovable, the untouchable. The new commandment is that we love others as God in Christ loves us, with compassion, with kindness, with tenderness, with gentleness, with understanding. We live on this particular Maundy Thursday in the aftermath of one of the greatest technological scientific engineering feats in history, the safe journey of the space vehicle Columbia. All of the to-do about this reminds me of some lines of de Chardin. Someday, de Chardin writes, someday, after mastering the winds, the waves, the tides, and the gravity, we shall harness for God the energies of love, and then, for the second time in the history of the world, we will have harnessed fire. The energies. A love that is total, that is self-giving, that is sensitive of and to others, a love that invites and attracts, but does not require or demand. A love that can be felt and can be given, even in the face of human failure and disappointment. Love like the love that Jesus had for the woman at the well, though he knew that she had had five different husbands. The love Jesus had for the woman on the beach, though he knew that she may well be an adulteress. The love that Jesus had for Peter, though surely he knew that Peter would forsake him and deny him. The love that Jesus had for Judas, even though he knew that Judas would betray him in the most despicable ways, with a kiss. "This is the new commandment," Jesus says, "that you love one

another, even as I have loved you." Perhaps as much as anyone who ever lived, Paul knew the love with which Jesus loved him. Perhaps because he knew the love with which Jesus loved him, he could write: "love bears all things, "believes all things, hopes all things, "endures all things. "Love never fails." The love with which Christ loves us is just that love. The love with which we are to love others, the new commandment, is to be no less. Amen.

- Will you join me by standing to repeat the affirmation of faith? (shuffling) Let us unite in this historic confession of the Christian faith. I believe in one god, the father almighty, maker of Heaven and Earth, and of all things visible and invisible, and in one lord, Jesus Christ, the only begotten son of God, begotten of the father before all worlds, God of God, light of light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the father, through whom all things were made, who for us men and our salvation came down from Heaven, and was incarnate by the holy ghost of the virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified, also for us, under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, and the third day, he rose again, according to the scriptures, and ascended into Heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the father, and he shall come again with glory, to judge both the quick and the dead, whose kingdom shall have no end. And I believe in the holy ghost, the lord, the giver of life, who proceedeth from the father and the son, who with the father and the son together is worshiped and glorified, who spake by the prophets. And I believe in one holy Catholic and apostolic church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come, amen. Be seated. Let us pray. God of grace, you have come to us in our savior, Christ, but we have reviled him, denied him, even betrayed him with a kiss. We have not faithfully followed his commandment to love one another as he has loved us. Have mercy upon us. Through the signs of bread and wine, reveal your love, which is constant in the face of our infidelity, and restore us by the power of your holy spirit, through Jesus Christ, our lord, amen. In this is divine love revealed. Not that we loved God, but that God has loved us, and has come in Jesus Christ to bring about true reconciliation. By the power of the cross and the resurrection, we are forgiven, amen. Our father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, they will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever, amen. Christ, our lord, invites to his table all who love him, and who desire to live in peace with one another. The peace of the lord is with you always.

- And also with you.

- Almighty God, our heavenly father, who of thy tender mercy didst give thine only son, Jesus Christ, to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption, who made there by the one offering of himself a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, and did institute, and in his holy gospel, command us to continue a perpetual memory of his precious death until his coming again. Hear us, oh merciful father, we most humbly beseech thee, and grant that we receiving these, thy creatures of bread and wine, according to thy son, our savior, Jesus Christ, holy institution, in remembrance of his passion, death, and resurrection, may be partakers of the divine nature through him, who in the same night that he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take, eat, for this is my body, which is given for you. "Do this in remembrance of me." Likewise, after

supper, he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink ye all of this, for this is the blood "of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many, "for the forgiveness of sins. "Do this as oft as you shall drink it in remembrance of me." Amen.

- Amen.

- The body of Christ given for you. (solemn organ music) The blood of Christ given for you.

- The blood of Christ given for you. (coughing) The blood of Christ given for you. (coughing)

- Our lord Jesus said, "A new commandment I give to you, "that you love one another, even as I have loved you. "And by this shall all people know "that you are my disciples, "that you love one another." Arise, dear friends, and go in peace. May the love of Christ be with you as you share this love with others. Amen. (coughing) (indistinct muttering) Our lord Jesus said, "I am the vine, you are the branches. "By their fruits, you shall know them." Arise, dear friends in Christ, and may the love of Christ, which has now been shared with you through his body and his blood, be shared with you to others, so that surely others might know that you belong to him. Go in peace, and may the peace of God be with you. Amen. (coughing) John writes about our lord. For God so loved the world that he gave his only son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent this son into the world not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. Arise, dear friends in Christ, and may that love which has come from God in Christ dwell in your hearts and lives from this night forth, and forevermore. Amen. (clearing throat) Y'all may want.

- Just cover that bread and put it on top of that other tray. Maybe disappear it. (coughing)

- Having received those very symbols of our lord's body and blood, even bread and wine, let us now offer to God a prayer of thanksgiving. Let us pray. Oh Lord, our blessed God, we, thy humble servants, desire thy fatherly goodness, mercifully to accept this, our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, most humbly beseeching thee to grant that by the merits and death of thy son Jesus Christ, and through faith in his blood, we and thy whole church may obtain forgiveness of our sins, and all other benefits of his passion. In here, oh Lord, we offer and present unto thee ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto thee, humbly beseeching thee that all we who are partakers of this holy communion may be filled with thy grace and heavenly benediction. And although we be unworthy, through our manifold sins, to offer unto thee any sacrifice, yet we beseech thee to accept this, our bound and duty and service, not weighing our merits, but pardoning our offenses. Through Jesus Christ, our lord, by whom and with whom, in the unity of the holy spirit, all honor and glory be unto thee, oh Lord God almighty, world without end. Amen. (coughing)

- Will you please stand for the reading of the gospel? And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the mount of olives. (uplifting organ music) (choir singing in unison) Please be seated. The lesson from the Old Testament is taken from the Book of Psalms, psalm 110, the first five verses. Hold not thy praise, oh God of my praise, for the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me. They have

spoken against me with a lying tongue. They compassed me about also with words of hatred, and fought against me without a cause. For my love, they are adversaries, but I give myself unto prayer, and they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love.

- And they went to a place which was called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." And he took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled. And he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. "Remain here and watch." And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, "Father, all things are possible to thee. "Remove this cup from me, yet not what I will, "but what thou wilt." And he came and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? "Could you not watch one hour? "Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words, and again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy, and they did not know what to answer him. And he came the third time, and said to them, "Are you still sleeping, and taking your rest? "It is enough, the hour has come. "The son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. "Rise, let us be going, see, my betrayer is at hand." (choir singing in unison)

- And immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the 12, and with him a crowd with swords and clubs from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I shall kiss is the man. "Seize him and lead him away under guard." And when he came, he went up to him at once, and said, "Master," and he kissed him. And they laid hands on him and seized him. But one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the slave of the high priest, and cut off his ear. And Jesus said to them, "Have you come out, as against a robber, "with swords and clubs to capture me? "Day after day, I was with you in the temple, teaching, "and you did not seize me. "But let the scriptures be fulfilled." And they all forsook him, and fled. (dramatic organ music) (choir singing in unison)

- And they led Jesus to the high priest, and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes were assembled. And Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest, and he was sitting with the guards, and warming himself at the fire. Now the chief priest and the whole council sought testimony against Jesus to put him to death, but they found none, for many bore false witness against him, and their witness did not agree. And some stood up and bore false witness against him, saying, "We heard him say, I will destroy this temple "that is made with hands, and in three days, "I will build another not made with hands." And yet not, even so, did their testimony agree. And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, "Have you no answer to make? "What is it that these men testify against you?" But he was silent, and made no answer. Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the son of the blessed?" And Jesus said, "I am, and you will see the son of man "seated at the right hand of power, "and coming with the clouds of Heaven." And the high priest tore his garments, and said, "Why do we still need witnesses? "You have heard his blasphemy. "What is your decision?" And they all condemned him as deserving death. And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to strike him, saying to him, "Prophecy!" And the guards received him with blows. (choir singing in unison)

- And as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the maids of the high priest came. And seeing Peter

warming himself, she looked at him and said, "You also were with the Nazarene, Jesus." But he denied it, saying, "I neither know nor understand what you mean." And he went out into the gateway, and the maid saw him, and began again to say to the bystanders, "This man is one of them." But again he denied it. And after a little while, again the bystander said to Peter, "Certainly you are one of them, for you are a Galilean." But he began to invoke a curse on himself, and to swear, "I do not know this man of whom you speak." And immediately the cock crowed a second time, and Peter remembered how Jesus had said to him, "Before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times." And he broke down and wept. (somber organ music) (choir singing in unison)

- Now at the feast, the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. And they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, "Who do you want me to release for you, "Barabbas or Jesus, who is called Christ?" For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up. Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him. "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, "for I have suffered much over him today in a dream." Now the chief priest and the elders persuaded the people to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas." Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with Jesus, "who is called Christ?" They said, "Let him be crucified." And he said, "Why? "What evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified." So when Pilate saw that he was going, gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood, see to it yourselves." (choir singing in unison)

- And the soldiers led him away inside the palace, that is the praetorium, and they called together the whole battalion. And they clothed him in purple cloak, and plating a crown of thorns, they put it on him. And they began to salute him, "Hail, king of the Jews!" And they struck his head with a reed, and spat upon him, and they knelt down in homage to him. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak, and put his own clothes on him, and they let him out to crucify him. (dramatic organ music) (choir singing in unison)