

Dear Friends,

When Jesus was born, Luke's gospel tells us that there was no room for him in the guest room. The Greek word "guest room" is used on only one other occasion in Luke. That is on the Thursday of Holy Week, the week we are remembering now. Jesus sends his friends to get ready for the Passover meal. Through them he asks, "Where is the *guest room*, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?"

From the beginning there had been no room for Jesus. "He came to his own and his own received him not." Now, at the last, with his execution about to take place, there is a guest room for him. In this space he shares a last meal with his friends. He gives them bread and wine and says, "Do this in remembrance of me." The word "Remembrance" means more than just bringing to mind a memory from the past, it means that the past event is here in the present and having an effect now. When we take communion our now is united with the now in the guest room with Jesus. We join with his prayer of thanksgiving. We receive bread and wine from his hands. It is with his life that we are nourished.

And, as we are welcomed into Jesus' guest room, so we are invited to make of ourselves a guest room. Once there was no room, now we make room for him in our hearts and lives. And when Jesus comes, he does not come alone. He asks "where is the guest room where I may eat ... *with my disciples?*" He calls us to make room also for his friends and to hold them in our hearts. And he has a lot of friends. In fact, I don't think there's anyone that he doesn't consider to be a friend.

After supper this call to welcome others becomes a mandate. Maundy Thursday gets its name from the mandate or command that Jesus gives on that day. He says, "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another."

He will go on to give a demonstration on the cross of what it means to love as he loves. However, between sharing the meal and giving the commandment he has already given a demonstration of what it means. More of that later in the week.

God bless you,

Tony