

## **Collect**

God our Father, you have invited us to share in the supper which your Son gave to his Church to proclaim his death until he comes: may he nourish us by his presence, and unite us in his love; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.           Amen.

## **Reflection**

The disciples gathered around Jesus, just days before his death, to share a Passover meal. They had greater freedom than we have this week. As much as we would want to meet in church on Thursday to share bread and wine and on Friday to quietly remember his sacrifice, we cannot.

What would the Last Supper look like under social isolation restrictions? Someone has helped us by posting an image of Leonardo da Vinci's mural painting with Jesus sitting alone in the middle of the table. The other disciples are depicted in boxes above, removed from the scene yet remotely present, just like a Zoom conference meeting today. Where would we be without a little humour in these challenging days?

The depiction of Jesus alone at the table is worth our reflection. What is Good Friday if it does not compel us to ponder Jesus utterly alone, betrayed and abandoned? He was surrounded by people but he could not receive any comfort. The darkest of days had to be faced alone. Did he anticipate that

desperate loneliness at the final meal he shared with his disciples? It is likely he did.

In November last year, I stood in front of Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper in Milan. I marvelled at the restoration work which has brought the dim figures depicted in the mural back, almost, to their intended prime. The identity and details of the individual disciples convey depth, life and vibrancy in a way which is remarkable in a two dimensional artwork. I could not have imagined that a mere four months later, no-one would be standing in front of this masterpiece.

We were created to be in community. We need one another and when we are forced to isolate we lose our sheen; we become dimmer like the disciples on

the mural over the years. The passion of Jesus depicts a dimming of humanity to the point where the human frame is so marred that it cannot be recognised as the bearer of God's image. The dark Saturday of Holy Week does not reveal to us the nature of the fracture in God's being. Scripture is silent.

We must not rush from Good Friday to Easter morning. We are required to wait in the darkness alone. And then to go again with Mary to the tomb that morning. In the new creation which begins that Easter Day, the colour and vibrancy returns. Just as the disciples on the wall of the refectory in the convent in Milan, emerge from the gloom of dust and decay, so we find ourselves together, renewed, re-born.

## **Collect**

Almighty Father, look with mercy on this your family for which our Lord Jesus Christ was content to be betrayed and given up into the hands of sinners and to suffer death upon a cross; who is alive and glorified with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

## **Blessing**

And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. Amen.