

Maundy Thursday

“O Lord, We Praise Thee” (*Lutheran Service Book*, #617)

“Give thanks to the Lord for He is good!”

Psalm 118:1

Jesus gave thanks. He blessed the bread and wine and gave it to His disciples and said, “Take and eat. Take and drink. This is my body and blood, given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.” Such simple words to be taken in simple trusting faith. The church of Luther’s day had filled the sacrament with superstition and unholy notions. The church of our day is no less prone to human corruptions. Some romanticize the sacrament into nothing more than the taste and the touch of love. Some idolize the sacrament to such heights in their liturgies that it easily replaces our blessed Savior Himself as the giver of salvation. Many within the church today trivialize the sacrament as something of little importance, only to be observed in obedience to our Lord’s command. Some discard the sacrament completely. This hymn does much to restore a right understanding of what God gives us in the Sacrament of the Altar.

(Stanza 1) Luther picked up on a Biblical hymn verse from the previous century that spoke the truth about the sacrament and about our Savior. The sacrament is given to us to believe and to receive. (Stanza 2) Luther then expounded the Biblical text of what the sacrament means for our relationship with God. He cleaves to us with His loving sacrifice that achieves for us a debt-free relationship with God. And we cleave to Him in faith and love. (Stanza 3) And then Luther brings it home with what Scriptures teach about what the sacrament works in our redeemed lives. By God’s grace we leave our lives of sin. By grace we interweave our life and faith together as we live our lives in the fellowship of the church. What a great encouragement to praise and thank our God!

“O Lord, We Praise Thee” is a great communion hymn. It is an excellent choice for Maundy Thursday worship. Luther suggested that it be used as a post-communion hymn. It serves well as a preparatory hymn for the sacrament also. I pray that the following sonnet will aid you in your contemplation of this hymn, the faith we share in Christ our Savior, and the blessings He gives in this sacrament. Give thanks to the Lord for He is good.!

## GIVE THANKS TO GOD

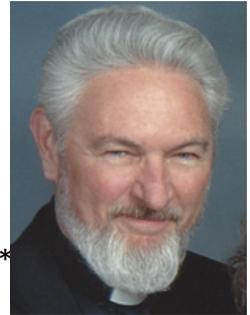
Give thanks to God! His promise I believe!  
He gives His blood and body for my soul.  
And so, in faith I gladly will receive  
Forgiveness for my sins that makes me whole!

By His great love I to His love will cleave,  
For in this feast He binds Himself to me!  
No greater love but His can this achieve;  
The pardon for my sins that sets me free!

All sinful ways and notions I now leave.  
In peace and love with others I forgive!  
And in my life, my faith will interweave  
In blessed hope with others as I live.

O Lord, we praise and bless You and adore!  
Your love and grace sustain us evermore!

Lonie Eatherton  
Fenton MO



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O Lord, we praise thee, bless thee, and adore thee,  
in thanksgiving bow before thee.  
Thou with thy body and thy blood didst nourish  
our weak souls that they may flourish:

O Lord, have mercy!

May thy body, Lord, born of Mary,  
that our sins and sorrows did carry,  
and thy blood for us plead in all trial, fear, and need:

O Lord, have mercy!

Thy holy body into death was given,  
Life to win for us in heaven.

No greater love than this to thee could bind us;  
may this feast thereof remind us!

O Lord, have mercy!

Lord, thy kindness did so constrain thee  
that thy blood should bless and sustain me.

All our debt thou hast paid;  
peace with God once more is made:

O Lord, have mercy!

May God bestow on us his grace and favor  
that we follow Christ our Savior  
and live together here in love and union  
nor despise this blest Communion!

O Lord, have mercy!

Let not thy good Spirit forsake us;  
grant that heav'nly-minded he make us;  
give thy Church, Lord, to see  
days of peace and unity:

O Lord, have mercy!

Text: Stanza one is from a 14<sup>th</sup>-century cento; Martin Luther wrote stanzas 2 and 3. This translation is from *The Lutheran Hymnal* (1941) and is copyrighted © by CPH.

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