

Maundy Thursday
Pastor Arndt

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The events of this past year have brought unprecedented changes. As witness to the fact, look at some of the new vocabulary words that are now a part of your everyday life.

“Quarantine”.

One year ago, if you asked me to describe what a “quarantine” was, I would have imagined a boy in a plastic bubble. Fast forward one year and I have been quarantined twice. Thankfully, there was no bubble involved.

“Mandate”.

In previous years on Maundy Thursday your Pastor struggled to explain what a mandate was. Mandates are now something with which we are quite familiar.

There is one word, however, that I believe has typified our lives this past year more than any other. The word is:

“virtual”

Before Covid-19, virtual was *exciting*. You could put on a virtual reality headset and pretend you were in another world. It was less exciting, however, when virtual started to creep its way into our real world.

For a period of six months last year, I was not able to give my mother a hug. We had to settle for “virtual”. Graduates of the class of 2020 received diplomas like every other year. The problem was, they had to receive those diplomas “virtually”. We have had “virtual” meetings, “virtual” school, even “virtual” church.

At the height of the pandemic, I remember listening to some Pastors who were wondering if we should try to have “virtual” communion. That, of course, does not work! The phrase “*virtual communion*” is an *oxymoron*. It is a contradiction of terms.

When he gives us His Supper, Jesus tells us to do this “*in remembrance of me*”. But do not be deceived! There is nothing virtual about the sacrament! In a virtual world you look but you cannot touch. In a virtual world you appear to be with someone while, in reality, you are not. That is not what Jesus means when he says, “*in remembrance of me*”.

In Holy Communion, God crosses impossible boundaries and enters your world. In fact, not only does God enter your world, he enters *your very self*.

The thought of God living and breathing within me is beyond my ability to comprehend. Because of my sin I am clearly not *worthy* of such a thing. In fact, because of my sin I am *terrified* of such a thing. But our loving Savior sets fear aside with his words, "*this is my body... this is my blood... given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.*"

My sin is real... I am certain of that. But my forgiveness is also real. The body and blood of Jesus make me certain of that.

If the past year has been defined by virtual, then Maundy Thursday is precisely the blessing from God that we need. Here the boundary between God and man has been made non-existent by the body and blood of Christ. Your world and his are one and the same.

In a world of virtual, your Savior's blessing is real!

-Amen