

Tomorrow will come (Maundy Thursday)

## **Anyone who has occupied spaces where death looms knows that the experience of time is anything but certain.**

by [Brian Bantum](#)

April 6, 2020

*To receive these posts by email each Monday, [sign up](#).*

*For more commentary on this week's readings, see the [Reflections on the Lectionary](#) page. For full-text access to all articles, [subscribe](#) to the Century.*

The idea of time shifting sometimes feels like science fiction.

But anyone who has occupied spaces where death looms knows that the experience of time is anything but certain. It gets measured in labored breaths or how many times Mom has gone outside for a puff of a cigarette. The membranes of today and tomorrow, living and dead, seem too thin. Every nerve seems both numbed and sharp at the same time.

Oddly enough, time and sense get bent in similar ways in the midst of protest and communal upheaval. Some students at one of my former universities began to protest the lack of diversity on campus and began to organize and occupy. When they were using our home one night for a meeting, you could feel the mingling of exhaustion and determinacy wafting off the students, each day bringing small successes or crushing setbacks. It felt like the whole world was at stake in every small decision, and they wanted to know what was going to come next.

But I couldn't tell them. We were just hosting. They were really leading us.

We seem to be living in a time of such moments—when each news day brings us closer to a future very few of us imagined. Even before the current pandemic, each

news report described people and families who exist in the wake of their kids torn away or polluted water or spilling pipelines or walls erected plank by racist plank. I don't think it's hyperbole to say that echoes of the past are compressing our present and making the future feel anything but certain.

So what does it mean for the disciples to gather around a table and consider, remember, reflect on Jesus' life and death? What does it mean for this community that has followed this man for three years and did not know it would feel like it was all crashing down in a matter of hours?

For those of us who have stumbled through hours of waiting for death, or have been carried by the buzz and furor of outrage and a thirst for justice, sometimes the simplest things drop to the wayside. "Take. Eat," says Jesus. Somehow in the fog of memories and the press of the present, tomorrow will come. What will we do then? Who will we be then? Take. Eat. Love one another. Because he has inclined his ear to us. Take. Eat.