

Sermon

Maundy Thursday

Exodus 12:1-14

Psalms 116:1, 10-17

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

John 13:1-17, 31b-35

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April 21, 2011

John 13: 1-17, 31b-35

One of the classes that I am required to take, in order to receive my Certificate in Spiritual Direction, is a class entitled Liturgical Spirituality Practicum. This is a practice class, and each student is required to plan and lead the class, as a spiritual guide, into some sort of liturgical exercise.

There are ten students in my class, and each week, since the first week in March, I have experienced some very interesting liturgical services. We've all had the opportunity to walk into the classroom not knowing what to expect, nor what type of service we will be asked to participate in.

A few weeks ago, we all came to class, as usual, and found ourselves faced with an agape and foot washing service. You should have seen the look, or should I say, the shock, on everyone's face, when we were told that we were to pair off, and each one had to wash the other person's feet. Not only did we have to wash the other person's feet, but we had to rub their feet with oil, as well.

Each person took the time and gently washed and oiled the other person's feet. I believe that we all showed such love and compassion towards the other person, while we were washing and oiling their feet because we all knew what that person was thinking, and we all wanted to re-assure, the other person, that all was well.

After the service, we all had an opportunity to comment on our feelings, and it was pretty clear that all of us had the same thoughts. How would the other person react to seeing my feet. I'm sure glad that I had washed my feet before I came to class today. One student commented on the fact that they did not have their usual pedicure, and felt real funny taking off their shoes and socks.

Our feet is our most vulnerable part, and not everyone is comfortable sharing that part of their body to the world, unless it is in the best of shape. Why is that? Could it be that our feet will be able to share many stories of the many places, where they have traveled over

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the years?

We all agreed that it must have been a very shocking experience, for the apostles, when Jesus got up from the table and started to wash their feet. We all agreed that the apostles sure didn't have time to think of an excuse or worry about how their feet might look, because probably no one wore any shoes. Who had time to think of a pedicure? We all agreed that Jesus must have washed their feet with the same type of love and compassion that we all showed towards each other.

In tonight's gospel reading, we hear Jesus saying to his apostles, “You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.”

Tonight, we are all given a new commandment that is to love, as Jesus has loved us. We are all mandated to love and be willing to wash another person's feet, even if that person is our enemy. Jesus washed Judas' feet with the same love and compassion that he had for the others, even though Jesus knew that Judas was the one who would betray him.

It is usually the custom for the servant to wash the Teacher's feet as well as any guest that comes to the master's house. Tonight Jesus has turned everything upside down by getting up from the table, and taking off his robe and begins to wash the feet of the apostles.

Tonight, Jesus invites all of us here to journey with him as he prepares for his final hours. Tonight Jesus is waiting at the door to wash our feet as we begin our journey with him.

Peter was the only one who objected to Jesus washing his feet. Did Peter have something to hide? Or did Peter realized who Jesus really was, and could not express it? Or did Peter realize that he should be the one to wash Jesus' feet not Jesus washing his feet. Whatever the reason, Jesus finally say to Peter, “Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.”

As Baptized Christians, we are all truly children of God, and as children of God, we are heirs to the kingdom. As Paul writes in his letter to the Romans, “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by glory of the father, so we too might walk in newness of

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life.”

Jesus is now inviting us to come and allow him to wash our feet. “Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.” Jesus is not concerned about how our feet look on the outside or the many stories they may tell.

Jesus is ready and willing to cleanse our feet from the inside. Jesus is ready and willing to handle our feet with that same tender loving care that he gave to his apostles.

Can you imagine Jesus giving your tired feet a wonderful massage? Come and allow yourself to be pampered by Jesus.

Allow Jesus to give you the best pedicure that you will ever experience. I promise that it will be a wonderful experience that you will never forget. You will find yourself exclaiming as Peter did, “Lord, not just my feet only but also my hands and my head.”

Jesus assures us that once we have bathed in that living water, we need only to wash our feet, for we are entirely clean.

Come allow the servants of the servants of God, the opportunity to wash your feet, as you begin your journey with Jesus, and pray, and watch, with him, as you journey into the garden of Gethsemane with Jesus.