

HOLY THURSDAY - MASS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

(Exode 12.1...14; 1 Corinthians 11.23-26; John 13.1-15)

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Excerpts of Pope Francis homily 2015

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Brothers and sisters, as we heard, Jesus was at table with the disciples, celebrating the feast of Passover. In the Gospel contains a phrase that is the very core of what Jesus did for us: “having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end” (Jn 13:1). Jesus loved us. Without limit, always, to the end. Jesus’ love **for us** knows no limits: always more and more. He never tires of loving anyone. He loves us **all**, to the point of giving his life for us. Yes, every one of us can say: “He gave his life for me”. For each person, by first and last name, His love is personal. Jesus’ love never disappoints, because He never tires of loving, just as He never tires of forgiving.

And then, He does something that the disciples don’t understand: washing the feet. In that time, this was routine, it was customary, because when the people arrived in a home, their feet were dirty with the dust of the road; there were no cobblestones at that time... no paved road. There were dusty roads. And at the entrance to the house, they washed their feet. For those you have watched the series “The Chosen”, you would have seen Jesus would wash his feet before going to sleep. In some areas, the washing of the feet was not done by the master of the house but by the slaves. Yes, that was the task of a slave. And like a slave, Jesus washes our feet, the feet of his disciples, and that is why He says: “What I am doing you do not know now, but afterward you will understand” (Jn 13:7). And because some people don’t like the word slave; they use the word servant. Well, Jesus’ love is so great that He became a slave to serve us, to heal us, to cleanse us.

Today, in this Mass, the Church would like the priest to wash the feet of 12 people, in memory of the 12 Apostles. But in our hearts, we must be certain, we must be sure that, when the Lord washes our feet, He washes us entirely, He purifies us, He lets us feel his love yet again. God’s love for us is like this. And today I will wash the feet of 12 of you, but all of you are in these brothers and sisters, all of you, everyone. Everyone who lives here. You represent them. But I too need to be washed by the Lord, and for this you pray during the Mass, that the Lord also wash away my impurities, that I might become a better servant to you, a better slave at the service of the people, as Jesus was. Pray also for more vocations to the priesthood. In this way, Jesus can continue to serve you, to heal you, to cleanse you through the priest.

Now let us begin this part of the celebration. I would like the Knights of Columbus to put the chairs in place so that those whom I will wash their feet may be seated in the isle, so that everyone can see.