

GOSPEL MESSAGE

April 2, 2026

MAUNDY THURSDAY

The Highest and the Lowest

The paradoxes of Holy Week continue during this supper scene. Jesus, the disciples' Lord and Teacher, the very Son of God, takes the posture of the lowest slave. Footwashing would be considered disgraceful for anyone other than the most menial servant. Despite this, Jesus, grounded in his identity as God's Son, serves his friends in this intimate, humble act.

John goes out of his way to emphasize both Jesus' divine confidence and the scandalous nature of his behavior. The highest exaltation and the most lowly servanthood stand in mysterious tension. Why must it be so? Only in this paradox can the full extent of divine love be revealed. God Almighty, in the flesh, serves. The one who should be attended by angels bends before those who will abandon and even betray him. There is no limit to how far Jesus will go to connect with us, no barrier that would prevent him from drawing near to us.

The use of water might remind you of baptism. In the sacraments, the God who transcends all of creation comes to you in earthly, physical elements: water, bread, and wine. Jesus reveals the divine identity: holy, glorious, and powerful enough to overcome sin and defeat death, but humble enough to use his might to redeem a world that rejects him. A mere human would not be strong enough to rescue us from sin, and a God who remains distant could not pay the cost of saving love. Jesus, human and divine, exalted and lowly, gives his life to us and for us on the cross.

This paradox not only gives us salvation; it invites us into a new way of life. We who need the washing of grace can live out that grace by washing the feet of others. We can serve. Knowing that Jesus has given all love to us, we can give that love away. This is the gift of our Lord and Teacher; may it be the path for our life together.

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