



Holy Thursday

Before the feast of Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to pass from this world to the Father. He loved his own in the world and he loved them to the end. The devil had already induced Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot, to hand him over. So, during supper, fully aware that the Father had put everything into his power and that he had come from God and was returning to God, he rose from supper and took off his outer garments. He took a towel and tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and dry them with the towel around his waist. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Master, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing, you do not understand now, but you will understand later." Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "Unless I wash you, you will have no inheritance with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Master, then not only my feet, but my hands and head as well." Jesus said to him, "Whoever has bathed has no need except to have his feet washed, for he is clean all over; so, you are clean, but not all." For he knew who would betray him; for this reason, he said, "Not all of you are clean." So, when he had washed their feet and put his garments back on and reclined at table again, he said to them, "Do you realize what I have done for you? You call me 'teacher' and 'master,' and rightly so, for indeed I am. If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do."

Introductory Prayer: Lord Jesus, I wish to accompany you closely on the road to Calvary. If I were to contemplate you more often as you hang scourged and bloody upon the cross, I'm certain I would be able to rest in your love and base my actions on that one truth. I know that you have loved me with an eternal love: you have proven it there

on the wood of the cross. So, I long to respond with gratitude, peace and the firm determination to spread your love to everyone.

Petition: Lord, grant me the grace of final perseverance in the faith.

1. The Proof of His Unwavering Love: “Jesus knew that his hour had come to pass from this world to the Father.” Jesus did not suffer crisis of identity. Throughout his entire public ministry, he showed an awareness of who he was (the Father Anointed One) and what he had come to do (his mission). He knew the trials that were soon to crush his mortal body. They would be a means to prove his worth: his love. “He loved his own in the world and he loved them to the end.” Love endures anything. Love can draw forth good even from the worst of situations. Love redeems. The very betrayal of his friendship will let him demonstrate the authenticity of his own friendship: “There is no greater love than to lay one’s life down for one’s friends.”

2. Acceptance of Christ’s Love: Jesus has not asked ‘permission’ to be humble and of service. Peter’s question, “Master, are you going to wash my feet?” does not come as a request, rather as a resistant acknowledgement of what Jesus is about to do. Do humility and love need our ‘permission’? The question is: who is humble enough to receive someone else’s love? Am I humble enough to receive Jesus’ love for me? Jesus’ humility and charity are purifying in their effect. In fact, precisely the attitude, “You will never wash my feet,” needs to be washed away. Only the poor in spirit, the pure of heart, the childlike enter the Kingdom of heaven: “Unless I wash you, you will have no inheritance with me.” Let Christ bathe me, then, by his graceful example. Anything less, I will lose my part with him. Yet if he has bathed me by his word, then I must only keep my feet clean.

3. The Precious Lesson: If I am a disciple, I must be careful to learn the lesson. Jesus asks, “Do you realize what I have done for you?” If anything, the master could demand that his servant wash his feet, not the other way around. Jesus is Lord and master, he is the Good Teacher. I am his disciple. Nonetheless, he has demonstrated his authority not by exacting obedience through exertion of force, rather by revealing the power of virtue: humility and charity – and their capacity to teach and persuade. “If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another’s feet.” He has given me a model to follow, so that I go and do likewise. Whose feet am I meant to wash?

Conversation with Christ: Lord, continue to bathe me with your word so that I may be found clean. Grant me the humility and charity to imitate your virtues. I wish to learn to wash the feet of others, so give me the grace to let down my defenses and simply reach out to do good, without worrying how others may react to me.

Resolution: Today I will humble myself to serve someone in need, especially anyone toward whom I have negative sentiments.