

A Reflection for Maundy Thursday

Do this is in remembrance of me...

We will be keeping this day in our own homes. Maundy Thursday is the day on which the Lord give us the new commandment (the new mandate) to love on another as he loves us. He shows that love in the act of washing the apostle's feet, but the larger act of love would come on Good Friday when he offers himself for the sins of the whole world. The entrance antiphon for this day gives us wonderful insight into the Triduum celebration: "We should glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, for he is our salvation, our life and our resurrection; through him we are saved and set free." (Gal. 6:14) We celebrate the triumph of God's love accomplished by the cross of Jesus Christ. Life is born from death. The liturgy of these three days is rich with symbols. The primary symbols of Maundy Thursday are the washing of the feet and the sharing of the Eucharist. These symbols embody the themes of service, priesthood, and unity. Jesus shows his love for us and we are challenged to share that love with others. At the Last Supper, Jesus transformed the Jewish Passover meal into a memorial of his death and resurrection. He becomes the new Passover, the Way to new life in the kingdom of God. Today, we as Christians gather to celebrate this covenant meal and bind ourselves to Him as we follow him to death and resurrection. And with Him, we surrender our lives for the sake of the world. This Maundy Thursday we are, in particular, able to give thanks to God for those who serve on our communities at this time. Perhaps we have taken for granted or not fully appreciated the service and sacrifice others have offered for us and for our communities, and perhaps this is an opportunity to think about those acts of love and care we have received from others, as well as those we might offer. On this night, Jesus shows us how we are to serve one another and how we are to show one another that we love and care. He also gives us the food for this work in His Body and Blood in the Sacrament of the Eucharist. This is a great gift from God to the world. The Blessed Sacrament sustains and strengthens us. I know it is a painful experience that we are not able to receive the sacrament together or to adore our Lord this evening on the Altar of Repose but this longing also teaches something about love. We have a love and a yearning for Jesus in the Sacrament because it sustains us, it guides us, and it strengthens us. We must never take this gift from God for granted as it is the way that he continues to show his love for the world. Tonight I invite you to join with me in saying this prayer:

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.

Body of Christ, save me.

Blood of Christ, inebriate me.

Water from the side of Christ, wash me.

Passion of Christ, strengthen me.

O Good Jesus, hear me.

Within Thy wounds hide me.

Suffer me not to be separated from thee.

From the malignant enemy defend me.

In the hour of my death call me.

And bid me come unto Thee,

That with all Thy saints,

I may praise thee

Forever and ever.

Amen.