

HOLY THURSDAY (A)

It was at the last Supper that Jesus instituted the Blessed Eucharist as a memorial of His Death and he asked us to continue celebrating it in memory of Him. Death itself is not something to celebrate but the death of Jesus is different because in dying he has destroyed our death and opened for us the way to Eternal Life. That is why tonight's liturgy is characterised by joy.

The Mass is a sacrifice. Most people are living out the sacrifice of the Mass in their ordinary everyday lives. Every Sunday we come to Mass, married couples are implicitly renewing their married vows which involves sacrifice, the priest is renewing his ordination which involves selfless service of the people and single people are implicitly rededicating themselves to the generous ways they expend themselves in service of others.

This is where the 'washing of the feet comes in'. At the time of our Lord washing the dusty feet of visitors was the norm. A servant in the household was assigned to it. It called for humbleness and individual attention. We don't wash peoples feet anymore but we put ourselves out for people in many and varied ways. We're in this world to look out for each other.

After Jesus had washed the apostles' feet he asked them to do the same for each other. Peter was stubborn and 'dug in his heels'. Sometimes, because of our pride, we won't allow people to help us – we prefer to be independent. Jesus told Peter that their friendship was well-nigh over if he remained so obstinate. Even Jesus must have felt let down when the three apostles in Gethsemane couldn't watch with him for one hour. When he needed them the most Peter, James and John had fallen asleep and the rest of them had fled the scene earlier. I'm sure Jesus was so grateful when Simon of Cyrene helped him carry his cross on the road to Calvary and Veronica wiped his face of blood and sweat. He didn't push them away.

For our friendship with Our Lord to be meaningful, there needs to be a strong connection between receiving Our Lord in Holy Communion and seeing him in the face of our fellow man and woman.

Maundy Thursday is so called from the mandate Jesus gave to His apostles at the last Supper: 'love one another as I have loved you'. Holy Communion with Jesus impels us to put this new commandment into action on an ongoing basis. That's why we're asked to come to Mass every Sunday.

At Mass, Calvary is, 'suspended in time' so that in joining our self-offering to His, we can in return obtain the grace to carry out His new commandment in our day to day lives.

[\(Back\)](#)