

## HOLY THURSDAY

*The astronauts Aldrin and Armstrong landed on the moon on July 20th 1969. Armstrong prepared for his moon-walk while Aldrin unpacked bread and wine. Aldrin describes what happened, and how he felt. "I poured the wine into the chalice. In the one-sixth gravity of the moon, the wine curled slowly and gracefully up the side of the cup. It was interesting to think that, the very first liquid ever poured on the moon, and the very first food eaten there, were the communion elements. I sensed especially strongly my unity with our church back home and the church everywhere"*

At the last Supper our Lord made himself sacramentally present in the form of Bread and wine. The Church describes the Mass as a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity. My union with Christ in the Eucharist will help me recognise Him in every individual I meet and, I hope, they in me.

But just like with Neil Armstrong, the Eucharist should also have a wider impact for us. We feel an affinity with our brothers and sisters in other parts of this world. We become concerned about what ruptures the human family. We're not happy with the gulf which exists, for instance, between the rich and poor nations and between different cultures and religions and even rifts within the same religion, like ours.

Through his death on the cross, which we celebrate in every Mass, Christ draws all men and women of goodwill to Himself and forms them into a collective force for good in the world. As a church, that is our ongoing mission. As globalised Christians we need to look beyond our own domestic frontiers onto the wider world. We need the grace of God which is dispensed to us particularly at Mass, to combat the dark forces of individualism and consumerism which fuel self-indulgence to the detriment of the world's poor and dispossessed. The

washing of the feet at tonight's Mass reminds us that that we're here to serve each other and 'wash each other's feet'

It is a well-known fact that the Universal church is doing its fair share to highlight divisions within our world and address its causes. It gives more than its fair share to alleviate world poverty. It was the church which, over the centuries, embedded Europe in a Christian culture, as a result of which missionaries were sent to far-flung corners of the globe. They didn't just preach the gospel but put flesh on the bones of their preaching by founding churches, schools hospitals and even co-operatives to supplement their mission. This is part of what it means to wash each other's feet in a truly catholic world-wide sense.

*The Mass is the life blood of the Catholic community and its mission. Our participation in the Eucharist should enthuse us to carry out with still greater devotion His mandate at the Last Supper to 'wash each other's feet' and not let up on the task.*