

HOLY THURSDAY

It was at the last Supper that Jesus instituted the Blessed Eucharist and he told us to repeat it in his memory. In the Mass we proclaim the death of Christ. Death in itself is not something to celebrate but that which leads to resurrection surely is. That is why tonight's liturgy is characterised by joy.

The Mass is not just a sacred meal – it is also a sacrifice. The word 'sacrifice' comes from the Latin, 'sacrum facere' - 'to make holy'. The priest is made holy by sacrificing himself for his people, so also the consecrated person. We, priests, renewed that commitment yesterday at the chrism mass in the cathedral. Married people are made holy by laying down their lives for each other and their children. Single people are made holy by helping people in their families or community who need them the most. This love is grounded on Christ's sacrifice of Himself when He laid down his life for us and at Mass that love is poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit provided we are in a state of grace to receive it.

This is where the 'washing of the feet' has relevance. Washing feet is a personal service requiring humility and individual attention. We don't see people as boxes to be ticked. Neither do we look on them as a burden or an inconvenience. We see the image of Christ in everyone especially the poor but then again who among us is not poor. Everyone, even the most self-assured, requires love in order to live a happy life and attain heaven.

After Jesus had washed the apostles' feet he asked them to do the same for each other. Peter was stubborn and didn't want to go down that route. Sometimes, because of our pride, we too prefer to be independent. Jesus bluntly told Peter that if he didn't let him wash his feet, they would have nothing in common. In other words Holy Communion with Jesus would not be possible if he remained stubborn. For our friendship with Our Lord to be meaningful, there needs to be a strong

connection between receiving Our Lord in Holy Communion and serving Him in others.

Maundy Thursday is so called from the mandate Jesus gave to the apostles at the last Supper: 'love one another as I have loved you'. He poured out his life for love of us on the Cross. If our love is not grounded on His then it might be little more than pious sentiment. Whose feet are we washing at present – I don't mean literally. Who are the people in our day to day lives that mostly depend on our care and concern even in small and seemingly insignificant ways?

At Mass we share in Christ's sacrifice of Himself to the Father. Calvary is 'suspended in time' so that the love which brought Jesus to the Cross will enter our souls in the here and now. In this way our Holy Communion with Jesus will bear fruit in holiness leading to resurrection and new life both here and hereafter. ([Back](#))