

Mass of the Lord's Supper

John 13:1-15

This evening we *commemorate* the Last Supper.

But what do we mean by “commemorate”?

Are we *re-enacting* what was lived on that intimate occasion?

Some of you might be thinking “Well, yes: commemoration, *duh.*”

Many Christians say “yes.”

Although we will perform many of the same gestures as did Christ that sacred evening, to “commemorate”, to remember *divinely* is not simply to recall, to bring to the fore of our memory some distant event.

To “commemorate”, to remember *divinely* implies *participation*.

And participation implies *presence*.

Our celebration, in a sense, places us at the table of the Last Supper.

In other words, what Jesus shared that evening with His Apostles, Jesus shares with us.

This evening, we gather around Jesus celebrating the sacred meal in *our* midst.

We *do* recall that first celebration.

We *do* recall that night when Jesus celebrated the Passover meal wherein the Jewish people celebrate their liberation from slavery in Egypt.

We *do* recall that night when Jesus took the Passover meal and brought it to completion by transforming into the celebration wherein we receive *Him* as our liberator, as our Passover.

We *do* recall the *institution* of the Eucharist.

But we do so

- *in celebrating it*
- in welcoming Jesus who, this evening, gives us His body and blood.

This is what it is to “*Do* in memory of Him.”

Now, interestingly, for this commemoration, the Church

- gives us the first part of chapter 13 of John's gospel
- invites us to consider this simple yet moving gesture of Jesus

Jesus washes the Apostles' feet.

In Jesus' time, sandals were standard footwear, and consequently, dirty feet were an issue.

A good host would wash the feet of his/her guests, a gesture of true hospitality. (It would be awesome if we had a tradition of doing so...)

Jesus performs this gesture, but it becomes so much more.

The washing of the Apostles' feet, which precedes the institution of the Eucharist, gives us insight into the Eucharist.

Jesus removes His outer garments and wraps a servant's towel around His waist. He stoops before each of the Apostles individually, *personally* to wash their feet, including those of Judas, the betrayer.

Indeed, divine love

- knows no bounds.
- is not hindered by betrayal.

When Jesus comes to Peter, Peter initially refuses, aware of his unworthiness.

Jesus tells Peter that he must receive the gesture.

Jesus reveals that the greatest thing that we can do is to

- let Him love us in the unsettling ways in which He comes to us.
- let Him love us in our unworthiness.

Through this gesture, Jesus teaches the Apostles that

- His purpose is to love them.
- love translates into service.
- He governs/leads them by serving them.
- if they belong to Him, they are called to the same.

In the Eucharist, Jesus

- stoops to reach us where we are not clean
- transforms our hearts that we might do the same for our brothers and sisters

The Eucharist is a gratuitous gift that

- floods us with the love of Jesus' heart *and*
- sends us forth to one another.

The Eucharist makes of us the Mystical Body, brothers and Sisters in Christ.

The Eucharist, therefore, makes us responsible for one another.

We become responsible for

- carrying one another
- being a stepping stone for one another
on our journey through Him, with Him, and in Him.

Tell yourself that the greatest thing that you can do each day is to be, for someone else, an encouragement to heaven.

It is daunting, but it is possible when we let Jesus wash our feet, and in so doing breathe into us the Holy Spirit...

It becomes possible when we receive the Eucharist.