

# Holy Thursday - April 6 2023

## Acknowledgment of Land, Seas, Skies and Waterways

We acknowledge the First Nations peoples as the first inhabitants of the nation and the traditional custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work. We pay our respect to the Elders past, present, and emerging, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of First Nations peoples across the nation. We acknowledge the deep spiritual attachment and relationship of First Nations peoples to this country and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of Reconciliation.

## Context - Holy Thursday: The Lord's Supper

As Lent concludes and gives way to Easter, we enter the Paschal Triduum which encompasses the central days of the Liturgical Year. Beginning on the evening of Holy Thursday with the Mass of the Lord's Supper, the Triduum lasts until the Easter Vigil. Liturgical time and chronological time do not align during this period. Chronologically the Triduum is three days, however, liturgically the Triduum is one day with different parts. The Mass of the Lord's Supper commemorates the Last Supper shared between Jesus and his disciples. It is at this supper where the institution of the priesthood and the Eucharist took place. Another key event that we recall during this mass is Jesus washing the feet of his disciples.

## Scripture: John 13:1-15

### *To the end he showed his love for them.*

It was before the festival of the Passover, and Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to pass from this world to the Father. He had always loved those who were his in the world, but now he showed how perfect his love was.

They were at supper, and the devil had already put it into the mind of Judas Iscariot son of Simon, to betray him. Jesus knew that the Father had put everything into his hands, and that he had come from God and was returning to God, and he got up from the table, removed his outer garment and, taking a towel, wrapped it round his waist; he then poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel he was wearing.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?' Jesus answered, 'At the moment you do not know what I am doing, but later you will understand.' 'Never!' said Peter. 'You shall never wash my feet.' Jesus replied, 'If I do not wash you, you can have nothing in common with me.' 'Then, Lord,' said Simon Peter 'not only my feet, but my hands and my head as well!' Jesus said, 'No one who has taken a bath needs washing, he is clean all over. You too are clean though not all of you are.' He knew who was going to betray him, that was why he said, 'though not all of you are.'

When he had washed their feet and put on his clothes again, he went back to the table. 'Do you understand,' he said, 'what I have done to you? You call me Master and Lord, and rightly; so, I am. If I then, the Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you should wash each other's feet. I have given you an example so that you may copy what I have done to you.'

The Gospel of the Lord

**Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.**



*First Station, The Way of the Cross by Suzanne Orchison (14 March 2023) and displayed in St Peter and Paul's Old Cathedral, Goulbourn NSW.*

## Reflection by Kirby Will Project Officer Identity and Outreach.

The Gospel for the Mass of the Last Supper is not one that we would expect; it does not focus on the breaking of bread and sharing of wine but instead draws our attention to Jesus washing the feet of his disciples. Russ McDougall offers an explanation for this when he says that the Gospel gets to the heart of the mystery of God instead of focussing on the history of what happened. The washing of the feet shows us the heart of God and sets the tone for life in His Kingdom - life where love for others drives our actions.

In washing the feet of his disciples, Jesus acts in a way that surprises us. The expectation would be that as Lord and Master, Jesus should be the one who is having his feet washed. Instead, he is the one who humbles himself to be at the service of others. As Bishop Anthony Randazzo notes, this is not a easy task: *'It is not easy to kneel before others and serve, unless one understands that what is done is for the good of the one being served. This kind of service is more than any sign or symbol can convey. It is, most importantly, service given in charity and love. One of our ancient Christian hymns sums this up beautifully. Ubi caritas est vera, Deus ibi est. Where charity is true, God is there.'*

Whilst the institution of the Eucharist is an important part of the Mass of the Lord's Supper, we participate in this regularly so let us use this opportunity to reflect on the act of the washing of the feet and consider how we could serve others in a similar manner.



Figure 1 Pope Francis washes the feet of women: [America Media](#)

**Prayer:** From *Holy Week at Home* published by Liturgical Press.

Loving God,  
You show us by example how to love others.  
Today as we celebrate Holy Thursday,  
we remember when you washed the feet of your disciples.  
Give us the strength to wash each other's feet,  
not only in the ritual moment of today,  
but in all moments of our lives.  
May we as a family recommit ourselves to the service of others.  
We ask this through Christ, our Lord.  
Amen.

### Call to Action:

- watch an animated version of the [Washing of the Feet](#).
- create a [3D Last Supper craft](#). Colour the image first and then cut on the dotted lines. Fold the A4 sheet so that the table forms.
- Children can colour [this page](#) in. Then use the scripture at the bottom to prompt a discussion about what it might mean or what it might look like in your family.
- use [this resource](#) as a guide for your own Holy Thursday liturgy.

