

**Exodus 12:1-8. 11-14; Psalm 115; Cor 11:23-26; John 13: 1-15**

---

Good people of the world are like small clouds in the blue sky: a wind blows and they are gone.

The people of this world are like Chameleons, they blend in, they survive, but then cannot be seen in heaven.

You are to be like the stars above, shining brightly and marking out the path you follow as you sacralise the World. There is only one Way.

Peter loves our Lord very much. He is very much aware that when Jesus kneels before him to wash his feet that the Lord is illustrating a point about service, which is why he recoils at it. Surely, it is not Jesus who should serve Peter, but Peter who should serve Jesus.

Feet are, on the whole, prone to be dirty. They are physically in contact with the world more than any other part of our body. As such they serve well as a metaphor for our souls and their spiritual contact with the world. This contact and connectedness so often contaminates them with sin. Our souls (and our minds ), like our feet (even if we are wearing shoes) bear a layer of dirt from where we have trampled spiritually and physically. If our feet, representing our soul, can be cleansed than the rest of us can be as well. So the

washing of feet is not just a question of service, it is service of purity. Origen writes:

*‘By washing and wiping, He made beautiful the feet of those who were to preach glad tidings, and to walk on that way of which He tells them, ‘I am the way’.*<sup>1</sup>

In washing His apostles’ feet Jesus is pre-figuring our Baptism, but a Baptism which is only possible when its meaning has been transformed by his own death and resurrection. It is only by Christ actually dying - nailed to the Cross and his pierced side pouring forth blood and water - that Baptism moves from a notion of ritual cleanliness to an act that changes us in very our essence – ontologically change - because of God’s saving grace. It is only by his dying for us in this way that we come to realise that when we are Baptised, we are washed not by water only, but by his Precious Blood. We are Baptised into his sacrifice and we too start to take on a Christ-like sacrificial shape. That is the meaning of his service to us.

Do not be lulled into a comfortable conviction or convention that this washing of feet is about merely your priest serving you as Christ has done at the Last Supper. He is a figure of Christ.

---

<sup>1</sup> Origin in Thomas Aquinas, *Catena Aurea, St John* p.425

## Easter – Maundy Thursday 2023

Therefore we are called to remember that we have been washed through the Baptism of both water and blood that flows from Christ's side on Calvary: to be, as the Rite of Baptism says; 'baptised into Christ's death and resurrection'.<sup>2</sup> It is a call to repentance.

It is this post-resurrection understanding – this Easter understanding - of the washing of the feet that Jesus is anticipating when he says: '*At the moment you do not know what I am doing, but later you will understand.*' All will become clear.

The washing of feet is a deeply Eucharistic moment which is instituted this day. To share in his body and blood by his command is to have our feet washed by this, his final and ultimate sacrifice, his act of cleansing for our souls; the centre of our being which is too often soiled from our encounters with the world where we have walked without caution or care. If we accept this service of the washing of our feet from Him, through His priests, so that we can walk with Him to his Cross; so that we can stand and watch at his Tomb; and so that we can then issue forth and proclaim the Easter message, then we will have truly learned to call him 'Lord'. Then our feet will be beautiful indeed.

---

<sup>2</sup> Rite of Baptism for Children p99.