

From the PASTOR'S DESK



Ultimate Love

When Judas had left them (Jn13:31), it was night. Judas walked away from the Light of the World. He walked out into the darkness of those who reject Jesus. Today's gospel is at the end of John 13. It is preceded by the Washing of Feet and the Institution of the Eucharist.

We think of the foot washing as a prefiguring of Christ's death on the cross - sacrificial love. Jesus washes the feet of each of His apostles. He even washes the feet of Judas while knowing that Judas would walk out into the darkness of betrayal.

After the foot washing, Jesus does something else. He dips a piece of bread into His dish and offers it to Judas. This is no small thing. It is the sign of His love. These two actions help us to understand the first line in John 13. ... having loved his own in the world, he loved them to the end (Jn13:1).

To the end could mean to the moment of His death, to the end of the world, or to the completion of God's saving purpose. Perhaps, poignantly, it could mean that He loved them even knowing that Judas would betray Him, Peter deny Him, and the rest abandon Him.

When Judas went into the dark, Jesus said, Now, is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. Jesus wasn't speaking about the distant future but about the Passion and Crucifixion. He was talking about glory in "dark times." In darkness, we behold glory because we see God as He is: God is love. We behold Him in the perfection of His love. We see Him in the loving obedience of the Son for the Father, and we see the enormity of His love for a sinful world.

This is the context for His new commandment. Love one another as I have loved you. This is how people will know us as His disciples. It is more difficult than it sounds. It is to walk in the opposite direction that Judas took. It is to walk out of the darkness and bring light.

Last week, when Pope Leo XIV accepted the vote of the conclave, he is reported have said, I accept the cross and the blessings of this office.

Pray for our Holy Father, Leo XIV. May he be recognized as a disciple of Jesus, may he bring light and unity to the Church, and may he teach the world how to love to the end.

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