

Jesús nos dio un ejemplo de servicio esta noche. ¿Cómo vas a responder? No solo esta noche, sino todos los días y noches después de esto... en casa, en el trabajo y en tu comunidad parroquial. ¿Estás aquí para servir? ¿O para ser servido? ¿Qué preferiría Jesús? ¿Qué quiere Jesús que hagas?

The gospel we heard begins by showing the depths of God's love for us. The washing of the feet is a foreshadowing of the cross. Traveler's feet would become very dirty with all kinds of filth and it was an act of hospitality to offer guests water to wash their feet. Who washed the feet? Was it the master of the house? No, it was usually a servant. But here Jesus, the master and teacher, is doing it himself; the master is doing the work of a slave. Similarly, by dying on the cross, the divine Son of God, through whom all things were made (remember the Creed!) will descend to the most miserable depths of human existence. Jesus' death on the cross cleanses us from sin and incorporates us into his divine life.

In addition to the cross, two sacraments are hinted at here: baptism, through which the entire person becomes clean, and reconciliation, through which the filth we accumulate after baptism is washed off. There is a spiritual and moral lesson we need to learn from Peter's response to Jesus' actions. Peter's reaction was based on a misunderstanding of what Jesus was doing—he was taking the washing literally. The deeper meaning is that Jesus died so that we can be made clean. Jesus wants us to share in his resurrection—but we have to let him cleanse us. Some people resist Jesus because they do not consider themselves to be sinful and never ask Jesus to cleanse them either through baptism or reconciliation. Others stay away because they are ashamed of their lives or secret sins. In both cases Jesus is gently saying, “Come, for unless I wash you, you cannot share in my inheritance.” Jesus wants to make us clean—but we have to let him do his work.

Some of you might be thinking: “what about service and charity and social justice?” Jesus definitely gave us those examples. If that smooths some of those ruffled feathers out there, hang on, don't get too comfortable. I am going to try to show you just how radical Jesus' example for us is.

This gospel shows the depths of God's love for us. It also shows the devil's hatred, not just of Jesus but of us. The devil wants to destroy us by destroying the only one who can set us free so he persuades Judas to betray Jesus. When Jesus says to Peter, “Not all of you are clean,” he is referring to Judas. Was Judas there? John's gospel is pretty straightforward: yes he was there. After the

footwashing, Jesus spoke about his betrayal, he told John who it was going to be, then he gave Judas a morsel, said “What you are going to do, do quickly,” and Judas left. And it was night.” Doing it quickly means Jesus was giving permission for the events of his passion to unfold and the night reference means it was dark outside and also in Judas’ soul. So Judas was there. Jesus, knowing what Judas had already done and was planning to do, washed the feet of his betrayer. Judas didn’t receive the spiritual benefits of the footwashing, but Jesus washed his feet nonetheless. Then he said: “I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do.”

We cannot limit our service and love and compassion to those we agree with or like. Limiting our charity in such a way is in disagreement with the Sermon on the Mount in which Jesus said: “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you.” How often do we turn against friends and family because we don’t like their politics or other ideas and behaviors? We should not allow them to continue to hurt us, but we must continue to love them and pray for their salvation. Loving our enemies and praying for them requires great sacrifice on our parts. But when we look at the cross and recognize that we ourselves are sinners, yet Jesus has forgiven us, how can we do anything less. We are called to imitate Jesus in all things, that means we must love in the way he loved. He will give us the strength we need to do that.