

Holy Thursday (2026)

Parents are a child's first and most influential teachers, tasked with instilling core values, safety lessons, and life skills. Some are taught deliberately through tasks, lectures, punishments, encouragement, and the like.

Even in matters of faith, the Church asserts that parents are the ones who bear the primary responsibility to ensure that what they believe is passed on to their sons and daughters.

If you could have your children remember only one thing from all the hundreds, maybe thousands of things you have taught them over their lifetimes, what would that one thing be?

What is most important for them to remember long after you have gone? What teaching stands at the top of everything you wanted them to know, accept, and understand?

We just heard a passage from John's Gospel that shows Jesus in this very predicament. Jesus knows that his death is near.

He is in the presence of his best friends, the ones who have been by his side for several years, listening to him, watching the things he did, traveling about from town to town.

And there was a lot packed into a short time. The stories. The miracles. The explanations. The scolding of the self-righteous. The demonstrations of compassion, forgiveness, and kindness. The reaching out to those on the margins of society.

Jesus had TAUGHT them a lot (through word and deed). And now, it was coming to an end. And Jesus has only time to remind them of one teaching, one lesson, one thing he wants to make sure they understand and never forget.

And so, he washes their feet, in the midst of the Passover, his Last Supper.

We might then infer that Jesus was actually teaching them two things that night, two final wishes, two teachings that were meant to stand in a place of importance in the hearts and minds of those who called Jesus friend, brother, Lord.

For many of the faithful (even for some clergy), tonight's Liturgy is sort of their personal "favorite" of the entire liturgical year.

And the two pillars it rests on, the two emphases of this night are the Eucharist and the washing of feet. And the amazing thing is, those two things aren't separate at all.

They are simply two essential parts of what it means to authentically embrace our faith, two parts of what it means to be a true Catholic, a true Christian, a true disciple of Jesus.

In other words, what we do at this sacred table, who we receive in this holy meal, is not to be seen in some sort of isolation, as some kind of spiritual gift we “get” for ourselves.

Rather, this sacred food is meant to transform us, help us actually become the One whom we receive.

That means that if we come to this table time and time again but never wash the feet of others, never care for our brothers and sisters, then God will not have achieved in us and through us what he wants to achieve.

Rather, what was meant to be a channel of grace has become an obstacle, what was meant to be life-giving has been anything but, and what was meant to be shared has been hidden away.

That’s the challenge of this holy night—to take all our gratitude and pay it forward through acts of love, take this holy food into our bodies and hearts and minds so that we can be more beautiful than we were yesterday, more merciful than we were yesterday, more compassionate and forgiving and generous than we were yesterday.

And so, every time we share a meal at this table, let's not forget that that's only part of what God calls us to do.

The other part? Well, that's up to us the moment we walk out that door into the world—a world in desperate need of what God is offering.

And the amazing thing is that the ones called to be that light, be those channels of grace, are you and me.

And it is this teaching that God never wants us to forget.