

Washing One Another's Feet

"Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you should also wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you." (John 13:14-15)



Pope Francis washing the feet of prisoners

The first of our four JPIC imperatives – Washing One Another's Feet – invites us to critically reflect on JPIC and our relationships of power.

In the world around us, we see the effects of unchecked power and the impacts it has on individuals, the environment, and indeed whole societies. But power is not only wielded by large entities – each of us plays a role in the way we conduct our relationships with others, and how we respond to the imbalances of power we observe around us.

Our *Constitutions* guide us:

"Caught up as we are in the desires of His Heart, we want people to grow in dignity, as human beings and as children of God.

Our starting point is the Gospel with all that it demands from us of love, forgiveness and justice, and of solidarity with those who are poor and rejected by the world." (Const. 7)

What are the different ways you experience power during your day? Whose power is it?

How does the mission of the Society guide us in our relationships with others?



A New Commandment

In *Artisans of Hope* we read:

"... we realise how important it is to exercise critical self-reflection about our concept and exercise of power and authority. We recognise our need to grow in freedom to speak about power and to share our inspirations and struggles in integrating it into our lives." (Page 9)

Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'* reminds us that:

“Disregard for the duty to cultivate and maintain a proper relationship with my neighbour, for whose care and custody I am responsible, ruins my relationship with my own self, with others, with God and with the earth.” (LS 70)

In his third encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis explores ways to build a more just and fraternal world in everyday life, through relationships, social interactions, politics and institutions. He uses the parallel of The Good Samaritan to demonstrate our co responsibility in building societies that are inclusive of all, particularly those on the margins.

“In many parts of the world, there is a need for paths of peace to heal open wounds. There is also a need for peacemakers, men and women prepared to work boldly and creatively to initiate processes of healing and renewed encounter” (FT, 225)



The Good Samaritan - Delacroix

What are some of the ways I can become an active peacemaker?

Are there others who might work with me to achieve this goal?

Pope Francis again says:

“We cannot be indifferent to suffering; we cannot allow anyone to go through life as an outcast. Instead we should feel indignant, challenged to emerge from our comfortable isolation and to be changed by our contact with human suffering. That is the meaning of dignity.” (*Fratelli Tutti* 68)

