



Easter Triduum 2021

Holy Thursday

1st April

To love to the end...

Jesus was aware before the Feast of Passover that his hour had come to pass from this world to the Father, that he had come from God and was returning to God. Time to show us his love to its fullest extent.

The Gospel of John, 13: 1 – 15 shows us a very significant action of Jesus in the context of the Last Supper.

1. Jesus got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and **began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.** (Jn 13: 4-5)
 - We allow ourselves time to contemplate this sequence of actions. We try to get to the heart of Jesus. What he is doing is extremely unusual in a person whom his own disciples and the people called "Master" and "Lord"; in the society of his time his was an action that belonged to slaves, servants and women.
 - Jesus humbles himself – this was his way since his incarnation: "He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant" (Phil 2:7) RSV). Washing the feet of each disciple is a way of showing them his love and welcome. Jesus breaks the patterns of master and slave, of dependencies; in his way, he was creating the horizontality of his Kingdom. He treats them as equals. That is the way of relating that Jesus shows us and invites us to live.



Leszek Forczek,
Washing of the Feet: Light to the Darkness

We can ask ourselves: *How do I live horizontality and equality in the groups to which I belong in mission and life; in my interpersonal relationships?*

2. Peter is unwilling to let Jesus wash his feet.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" (Jn 13: 6-9)

Peter does not accept Jesus' gesture, he does not understand it, and he resists. He **needs to change his mental models about power.**

- The document *Artisans of Hope*, p. 8, says: “Power, when exercised without mutuality and reciprocity, becomes a tool of domination and oppression.”
- P. 8-9: “Power affects the way we relate in community, live our vow of obedience, collaborate with people and groups in our ministries, and value or, at times, hold on to, the ministries entrusted to us.”

We might ask ourselves: *How do we live mutuality and reciprocity when we are exercising power in our life and mission?*

3. When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. **“Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.”**
(Jn 13:12-15)
- We are invited to wash one another’s feet in mutuality and reciprocity. This is the way of Jesus: “wash and let yourself be washed”. We remember how Jesus let a woman wash his feet with the tears from her eyes and wipe them with her hair, how she kissed his feet and anointed them with perfume. At the end of the scene, Jesus tells Simon that the woman has shown great love by this gesture and so her sins are forgiven. (Luke 7: 36-50)

We remember our experiences of service. *What lessons have I learnt?*



4. From the encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti* 115: (...) Service in great part means “caring for vulnerability, for the vulnerable members of our families, our society, our people”. In offering such service, individuals learn to “set aside their own wishes and desires, their pursuit of power, before the concrete gaze of those who are most vulnerable ... Service always looks to their faces, touches their flesh, senses their closeness and even, in some cases, ‘suffers’ that closeness and tries to help them. Service is never ideological, for we do not serve ideas, we serve people”.

How does this text enlighten me?

5. We finish our prayer with thanksgiving for so much love received from Jesus and from our sisters and brothers. We ask for the grace to love one another as He has loved us.

May we be blessed if we fulfil Jesus’ desire to wash one another’s feet, serving each other!