

Holy Thursday: Food, Not For Thought, but for **Action**

Intro. For me and countless other kids growing up in Florida, it was a great day when we could get rid of our shoes and go barefoot all day. By the end of the day, our feet were covered with the evidence of where we had been and what we had done. There was mud from the creek and dust from the yard. Occasionally there was other stuff that got squished between our toes that we hoped was just rotten figs from our grandmother's tree.

I. So it was in the Testament times. Some people wore sandals but that didn't really keep the dust and dirt from the streets from covering their feet. It was the servant or slave's job to wash the master's feet when he or she entered the house. For the *master*,

almost nothing felt as good as warm water washing the dust of the day from the feet. For the *servant*, it was one of the worst jobs. This is what the Lord did. Imagine the looks on the faces of the disciples as they squirmed, looking at each other, trying to find a way to stop him. Only Peter was bold enough to say no. This action speaks clearly of the love the Lord had for his disciples and all of us: a life given totally in service of others. No clearer sign than washing dirty feet.

The Eucharist is the other gift of that night. Paul's letter to the Corinthians is the oldest written record of the Eucharist; even before the gospels were written. He wanted the church in Corinth to know that what they were doing was handed down to him from the apostles and now to them. They were to celebrate it correctly and well. As we are.

Concl. John's gospel is the only one with the mandate to wash feet. He chose to focus on this action as the heart of the meal: total sacrifice for one another. It is what the Lord did throughout his ministry and what he calls his followers to do also. The necessity of *remembrance* is fundamental in Jewish tradition. The Lord gives us a way to remember *him*: not only in the breaking of the bread and the sharing of the cup. Whenever we do that, as Cardinal Wuerl said at the Eucharistic Congress, it is much more than a picture taken and looked at once in a while; the Lord is **truly** present. His life given totally for us. We must follow his example, with the same consequences: it can painful and humiliating just as it was for the Lord.