

## Holy Thursday 2018

I am about to wash 12 very, very fine Catford feet; there could be none better. Why? Because Jesus did it to create a picture for us that he said was really important for us to see when we do what he did as his last supper with his disciples. The Mass, the Eucharist, that he established was beautifully described during the Vatican Council as the **source and the summit of the life and mission of the Church**, the source and the summit of all Christian life. But, Jesus says, it must never get too far away from washing feet!

Jesus established the mass through the Jewish Passover celebration that he led all those years ago. Our 1st reading (Exodus) tells us about Passover: It is linked to the great event for the Jews of their Exodus from Egypt, an event where destruction passed over them and hit only the Egyptians so that *they* could escape with Moses to freedom. It is at the heart of the Old Testament of God's faithfulness to his people.

Jesus & his disciples were celebrating Passover this very night when Jesus blatantly took it over for his own purposes. His life was to be given on the Cross to any who would share in the meal. The new meal or "mass" is a deeper expression of the very **essence** of God's relationship with his people. It expresses the SACRIFICE of God for us. Jesus offered himself in sacrifice as the lamb of God. That's who Jesus is, the Lamb of God, the one who gives up his life so that it can be shared with us all.

Now, during Lent you and I have been making an extra effort to give up a little more of our life for others and in particular, many of us will have tried to give a little of our quality time for others and placed those promises here on our Lenten Cross. I have to try and understand and indeed, experience sacrifice in my own life. Otherwise how can I get closer to Jesus whose life was defined by sacrifice? He gave up his whole life. I have been struggling each week of Lent to give up an extra hour of mine! But still, its been worth it.

Jesus expressed who God is, a faithful God who was prepared to give up his only Son. This was not some concession to a wayward Humanity. It is the very nature of God, but is the true nature of humanity as well. That is why Jesus says we must take up our cross and follow him. He is showing us what it means to be truly human - that we give up more and more of our lives for others as a way of returning this precious gift of life to him. Indeed *all that is not given will ultimately be lost!*

So then, our Eucharist, the source and summit of our life and mission: It expresses the gift of God's life to us and for us but it invites us to participate, to join in this gift of love. But to join in the sacrifice is not just to receive God's gift to us. It is also to give ourselves in that same sacrifice to others.

But we can get lost in words sometimes so he gave us a picture to help get this message across. You can almost feel his frustration when he says to the disciples: “Do you understand what I have done?” It is really important.

It is imperative that our mass celebrates our true relationship with each other as well as with God. **We shouldn't be proclaiming Christ's life, really present in our Church if we are not expressing his real presence in our loving service of each other and of others.**

The proposition was rehearsed with James and John and referenced in Paul's letter to the Corinthians that we have just heard. To drink from the same Cup as Jesus, to drink of his blood is not just to enjoy his party; it demands that we take on the call to sacrifice. It is what will give our lives meaning

So, Jesus invested into the Jewish Passover a deeper expression of God's essence and of his relationship with humanity. God's reality is defined in sacrifice and his relationship with us is expressed in Jesus by his loving sacrifice for us all. In the New Passover, or mass as we call it, Jesus shares his very life with us, a life he willingly gives in service to us, but he demands of us the same sacrifice of placing our lives – our time, talent and treasure in service of others.

Now then we make a copy of his picture. What I do for the 12 on the sanctuary, we together must do for the world so that all may find his real life present among us.