

Maundy Thursday  
April 9, 2020  
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## **Washing Feet!**

I don't know about you, but I've found myself staying at home these days, which in turn has left me with a lot of time on my hands. Sometimes, oh who am I kidding, a lot of times I find myself scrolling through the feed of my Facebook page. There I can see all the things my friends are doing or get lost in the loop of funny cat videos; have you ever seen a cat's reaction to a cucumber? As I was scrolling, I came across a video that was a little more serious in tone. In fact, it started out rather bleak in my mind, showing scenes of a poor and run down neighborhood.

You can find this video on YouTube if you would like to view it for yourselves, and I will even post a link in the comments after the service tonight. This video was titled "Simple Acts of Kindness (Part 1)" and the story goes something like this.

A young man is walking down the street, water from a drainpipe falls on his head and soaks him. His response is to put a thirsty plant where the water is falling. As he continues his journey he meets a street vendor pushing her cart, but she needs help getting the cart over the curb and he stops and helps her. He continues, he stops to eat his lunch, and a dog with pleading eyes begs for food, which he shares. As he continues his walk, he sees a mother and her child in need on the street and gives them a few dollars. They seem surprised at his generous gift. He finally arrives at home, but before going in, he hangs a bunch of bananas on an elderly neighbor's door. This man's daily walk repeats several times, each day he walks, his acts of kindness continue. Eventually, the plant starts to flower and blossom, the street vendor and he share laughs, and the dog becomes his friend! Then he comes to where the mother and child are on the street corner, and the little girl is not there. He looks heartbroken and dismayed. Then she appears in the scene, this time not in tattered and torn rags, but a school uniform with an ear to ear smile. A few humble acts of kindness in this man's walk of life, made a difference. In a way he washed the feet of each person he encountered—including the dog. He built relationships, he shared his time, and what he had, and he changed their lives forever. Jesus did the same for us.

This leads me to the story, we just read.

After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them."

What just happened? What had Jesus done? What did this mean? I'm sure these are all questions the disciples had going through their minds. Masters don't stoop to care for their servants. This was new, this was radical! Jesus in his humility performs the lowliest of task by washing the feet of his disciples. In Jesus' time, at a diner like this the disciples would have already gone through a though a ritual of washing, except for their feet, and remember that they walked in sandals or barefoot, their feet were filthy. We understand this in Peter's reply to Jesus that he would never wash his feet. Jesus tells Peter that a person who has washed

does not need to be washed again, except for the feet. Jesus was saying if I love you this much, you should share this love with others. You should stoop down and meet others where they are, just as Jesus meets us where we are. Jesus, in washing the feet of his disciples does three things; he strengthens his relationships, he shares his time, he changes their lives forever.

Sure, Jesus had a relationship with each of his disciples, but now the relationship has changed. We see the Lord, humble himself and in doing so, Jesus meets his disciples where they are and builds that one-on-one connection—a connection where vulnerabilities are seen and shared, and where hopes and dreams can be explored. Jesus, in his final hours, knowing what fate befalls him, takes time, time to one by one wash the feet of each of his disciples. Jesus changed the lives of his disciples. We are the hands and feet of Jesus in our time, and our simplest of acts can be life changing to each other.

Today, it may seem odd to walk up to a stranger and offer to wash their feet. Some might even suggest such an act is crazy, and that you may need a visit with a professional. So how do we live out Jesus' commandment, what does it mean for us to wash the feet of another? For us to literally wash the feet of others, would not be well received. But, this washing the feet of a stranger could take the form of a simple smile. Perhaps, sharing a lunchtime break with a coworker who is having a hard time, giving someone a compliment, in some way, letting people know that they are seen and that they matter. Sometimes you might want to get your hands a little dirty by helping a struggling parent by taking their child to play at the park, giving them a moment to rest and restore themselves, or reading a story to a lonely child in the homeless shelter.

In this time of social distancing, or better said by our Presiding Bishop, physical distancing, because now, being social and connected in some way, is more important than ever—these simple acts might need to be something that doesn't require being physically present with someone. So many ideas come to mind; A word of thanks to the cashier at the super market as you check out the groceries that you picked up because you couldn't get a time slot on Instacart or Home Delivery, oh and while you're there, grab a few extra of something that you can drop off at your homebound neighbor's house or the local food pantry. Maybe it looks like starting a FaceTime call or Zoom Meeting with friends you know live alone and would benefit from seeing a friendly face and some conversation. For those who don't have access to virtual chat options a good ole' fashioned phone call would do the trick -- not sure what to talk about--ask if you can read them a story. This past week, I took advantage of the beautiful weather and planted some flowers in our flower bed out front of our house. The neighbors commented on how much joy the bright colors bring them, so maybe its planting some flowers, we have Sherri and the Layweeders and Aqualytes for planting in our garden's here at Holy Cross.

Every humble act of kindness, every gift you have to give, as big or as small as you can imagine, is a gift. Take the time to build and strengthen relationships with the people you encounter in the world. Your acts of love will change lives, and through those acts your life will change as well.

At the end of the day, we are all in this together. Jesus loves us, and he gave himself for us. Jesus calls us to love and serve each other, as He has loved and served us. Let's remember to share that love, every day, and with everyone. Amen.

<https://youtu.be/GdYJro3eJjE>

John 13:1-17, 31b-35