

The 'Maundy' Thursday Story

Today is Maundy Thursday of the Christian Holy Week in the West. Traditionally, the day remembers the Last Supper, Christ's washing of the disciples' feet, and the great mandate, which is where the name Maundy is derived.

To begin, the name 'Maundy' is [derived](#) from the Latin word 'mandatum', which means 'commandment'.

From the 13th chapter of the Gospel of St. John we get both the story of the washing of feet and the mandate:

"Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. And during supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper, laid aside his garments, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter; and Peter said to him, 'Lord, do you wash my feet?' Jesus answered him, 'If I do not wash you, you have no part in me.' Simon Peter said to him, 'Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!' Jesus said to him, 'He who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but he is clean all over; and you are clean, but not all of you.' For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, 'You are not all clean.'

When he had washed their feet, and taken his garments, and resumed his place, he said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I

have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.”

Towards the end of the chapter, Christ gives his disciples the mandate that gives Maundy Thursday its meaning:

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Whether one believes Christ is God or not, the story and the commandment are still compelling examples of love through humility – master washing his servants’ feet, God serving his creation.

How many celebrities, political, or corporate leaders would do the same when the camera is not on them? More to the point, how many of us will stoop to humble ourselves and serve others? And do Christians live up to the commandment?

In a world seeking greatness, perhaps more love through humility is needed.