



## Maundy Thursday

### The service and self-giving of Christ

*“During supper, Jesus got up from table, removed His outer garments and, taking a towel, wrapped it round his waist; he then poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel he was wearing” (Jn 13:4-5).*

What great love is manifested to us on this day, what extraordinary gestures do we encounter! The Lord of heaven and earth washes the feet of His disciples, thus revealing to them more deeply what their discipleship is all about: it is about service. God Himself, in His infinite love, serves man; and He calls us to live in this same service.

So, if we ask ourselves how we can serve our neighbour, the answer is: As Jesus serves us! There is nothing too low or despicable for Him so that He would not touch and transform it with His love. He makes His disciples the princes of His kingdom; He wants to make saints out of sinners.

*"You call me Master and Lord, and rightly; so I am. If I, then, the Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you must wash each other's feet" (Jn 13:13-14).*

We wash the feet of others when we receive them into our hearts, even those who are far away. We serve our neighbour - and first and foremost our brothers and sisters in faith - when day by day we try to imitate the Lord in everything and to do our works in Him. We serve when we do not close our eyes to the needs of others, be they material or spiritual. We wash each other's feet when we exhort and encourage one another to live and act in the spirit of Jesus, for He gave us an example so that we imitate what He did for us.

And as if He had not yet given us enough tokens of His love, Jesus wanted to leave us forever the actualisation of His surrender to the Father and to mankind.

Thus, not only does He wash the feet of His disciples, but He gives Himself as food. He is the bread that came down from heaven (cf. Jn 6:51); He is the fruit of the tree of life, which we had not been able to receive since the moment we lost Paradise; He offers us His Flesh and Blood as nourishment, on the eve of His Crucifixion, so that we may have life and the life of God may grow in us. He not only gives something of Himself; He gives Himself.

How much glory is given to the Father! What a redundant help of grace is offered to us men! Who can understand it?

Day by day this mystery is made present in the Holy Sacrifice of the Eucharist; day by day, until the consummation of the world, the event of Golgotha is made unbloody present. Day by day people are invited to prepare and purify themselves to receive this holy nourishment, so that it may unfold its effect of grace. Day by day we can receive the Lord when we live in a state of grace. Day by day Jesus gives Himself to us, and the priest, in the name of Christ, can offer Him to people. Day by day immeasurable rivers of grace flow, which God has prepared for mankind. Day by day the work of redemption is accomplished in us, when we accept the Lord's invitation.

Our praise can never be muted, neither on earth nor in heaven, when we acknowledge the Lord and His works! All glory be to the Triune God!