
PRAY WITH ME

Self-giving God,
your love for us and the world you have
made surpasses anything we can imagine.
Again and again you have knelt before us
and ministered to us in our need.
Never let us forget such love, dear Lord.
Give us new passion to share this same
love in humble service
to all those you send to us in
their time of need.
For the great privilege of this
health care ministry,
we give you all thanks and praise.

AMEN.



EASTER TRIDUUM



**“If I, therefore, the master and
teacher, have washed your feet,
you ought to wash one another’s feet.
I have given you a model to follow,
so that as I have done for you,
you should also do.”**

JOHN 13:14-15



There is perhaps no other part of the human body as humble as our feet.

They are literally at the bottom of everything that we identify as our physical self. Our feet are our connection with the soil of the earth and carry us all through our life's journey.

To touch the feet of another is an intimate gesture in many cultures. In our culture, we entrust such touch to those who love us most. In Jesus' day, walking was the usual means of transportation. Because feet were only partially covered, foot washing was a frequent need. It served as both a gesture of hospitality in domestic settings and as a means of ritual purification before entering both domestic and sacred spaces. Those who performed the actual foot washing were at the bottom of the social hierarchy.

How significant it is that Jesus voluntarily takes up this lowest of tasks at the Last Supper with his disciples. This act and its meaning could not have been clearer or more shocking to them, so much so that Peter refused at first to allow the Lord to debase himself in this way. All the themes of our Lenten retreat are powerfully captured in our imitation of Jesus' foot washing during our worship on Holy Thursday. This act expresses all that preceded this moment for Jesus and all that follows — his utter self-emptying on the cross of Good Friday and the vindication of that offering in his Easter resurrection.

In earliest Christianity, the foot washing by Jesus was so significant that this Scripture was proclaimed during the baptism of new Christians. It made clear that through baptism new disciples are called to serve this broken world so beloved by God. If we need one image which captures the soul of Jesus' mission and ours, it is that of Jesus washing his disciples' feet. All else was elaboration and consummation of what he had given away that Holy Thursday night.

We plumb the depths of this self-giving every day in the ministry of Catholic health care. Our calling is to serve others in their brokenness. Our touching, tending, washing of those who are in

our care is a manifestation of the same humble compassion that God has shown us in the Christ. Each day we are privileged to live out this mystery of self-emptying love which, by God's grace, helps to make those we serve more whole. Along the way, we ourselves rediscover our own brokenness and God's humble, healing touch.

FOR REFLECTION

“I used to pray that God would feed the hungry, or do this or that, but now I pray that God will guide me to do whatever I'm supposed to do, whatever I can do. I used to pray for answers, but now I'm praying for strength. I used to believe that prayer changes things, but now I know that prayer changes us and we change things.”

(St. Teresa of Kolkata)

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- ◇ Will I commit to some quiet time of prayer/reflection during these three holy days?
 - ◇ Whose feet am I called to wash/who to humbly serve in my life's relationships?
 - ◇ Whom must I be humble and vulnerable enough to let wash my feet/share my own need?