



Love one another as I have loved you...

Holy Thursday,
an important
day in Holy Week, is
sometimes referred to as
Maundy Thursday, *Maundy*
being derived from the Latin
Mandatum meaning *command*.

John the Evangelist is the only
recounting who relays this intimate
encounter that Jesus had with his apostles
in the Upper Room. John tells us that Jesus
astoundingly took off his outer garment and
insisted that he wash the apostles' feet. True
to form, Peter wasn't having any of this and
resisted. Over the years we've heard Peter's
eventual reply "*Wash not only my feet but my
hands and head as well*". (Jn 13) There is no
doubting blundering Peter had enormous love for
Jesus and showed his deep allegiance.

It is only after the washing that we hear Jesus
give the *Mandatum* to the group: "*I give you a
commandment. Love one another as I have loved
you*". This message is integral and central to this
event and is used as the response to the reading at
Holy Thursday Mass.

Richard Rohr comments that he is amazed that
Jesus did not make foot washing a sacrament. He
goes on to say that Jesus "wanted to give a theology
of the Eucharist that revealed the meaning behind
the breaking of the bread. He made it into an active
ritual of servanthood and solidarity, instead of the
priestly cult that it has largely become... So Jesus
has to insist on being the servant lover. Thank God,
Peter surrenders, but it probably takes him the rest
of his life to understand."

(Adapted from Radical Grace: Daily Meditations, p.143)

Jesus, surrounded by his close companions, was
troubled and lonely. He knew that he also was
rubbing shoulders with his betrayer. He gave them
Eucharist and added the second *Mandatum*: "*I
received from the Lord what I also handed on to*

*you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed
over, took bread, and, after he had given thanks, broke
it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in
remembrance of me"* (1 Cor 11)

Holy Thursday, the celebration of the Passover, is now
celebrated as a new passing over as the mysteries of
this night invite us to review our own need to change, to
be faithful, to realise that we have a source of life in our
very midst because Jesus had the courage to face the
challenges that led to his eventual transformation. He
left himself for us; he demonstrated servant leadership
and showed us how to love.

Maundy Thursday

*Here is the
source of every
sacrament,*

*The all-
transforming
presence of
the Lord,*

*Replenishing
our every
element*

*Remaking us in his
creative Word.*

For here the earth herself gives bread and wine,

The air delights to bear his Spirit's speech,

The fire dances where the candles shine,

The waters cleanse us with His gentle touch.

And here He shows the full extent of love

To us whose love is always incomplete,

In vain we search the heavens high above,

The God of love is kneeling at our feet.

Though we betray Him, though it is the night.

He meets us here and loves us into light.

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Holy Thursday