

## Maundy Thursday 2021

Grace and peace be with you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

So, I was at Hobby Lobby on Wednesday picking up some Easter décor, when I came across this (crystal drops), and I thought to myself – cool, Baptism! So I grabbed them and took them up to the cashier.

She looked at them and remarked how pretty they are. I told her I was going to use them for Easter and she said, “oh, tears,” which caught me off guard, because I was thinking the waters baptism.

I guess she could have been talking about tears of joy, but that’s not what came to mind for me. When she said tears, I immediately thought about the crucifixion and all of the tears that were shed at the cross.

Later on I thought, “Oh, this could also symbolize the water Jesus used to wash the disciples’ feet, which we remember today on Maundy Thursday.

I hadn’t really thought about the water connection between all three days of the Triduum, that’s what we call this really long service that starts here with Maundy Thursday and ends with the conclusion of the Easter Vigil on Saturday.

As it turns out, water is running throughout the entire three days. Feet washing water, disciples’ crying tears, and the water of the baptismal font.

Water. Water ties it all together. So, be on the lookout for this symbol for water tomorrow, Saturday, Sunday, and throughout the full 50 days of Easter, and probably Pentecost too.

Water. It is a precious commodity, and in Jerusalem it was also a scarce commodity. We can kind of relate to that, but it’s even dryer there, so water is never taken for granted, nor is it abused, because without water there is no life.

Today we ponder the water Jesus used to wash the disciples’ feet.

For John, it’s not the meal that’s so important at the Last Supper, but the washing of feet and the command that goes along with it – love one another as I have loved you.

Today is called Maundy Thursday, because Maundy means commandment. At the Last Supper Jesus commands us to love one another and shows us how it’s done

through the washing of the disciples' feet, which will then be followed by the crucifixion.

When Jesus bends down and takes on the role of a servant, a very lowly servant, and washes the disciples' feet, he is showing them humble service.

Today is April Fools Day, but the washing of the disciples' feet was no prank. They may have initially thought, "This is a joke, right?" But it isn't. Jesus is very serious in teaching us what it means to be his followers, and it is humble service, which is not the same thing as humiliation.

Tomorrow the authorities will attempt to humiliate Jesus, but he goes forth to the cross as a humble servant. This is something he chooses to do.

We choose to be humble, others try to humiliate us.

Humble is the attitude of love. Humiliation is the attitude of hate aimed at another, but we'll get to that tomorrow. Today, Jesus wants the disciples to know that humbly he will do absolutely anything for us, including death on the cross.

So, by washing the disciples' feet the night before he is crucified, he is telling us that what is to come has nothing to do with him being humiliated, because the truth is that he is a humble servant.

By washing the disciples' feet, the feet of those whom he loves, Jesus is setting before us an example of what it means to be his disciple.

As his disciples, we are called to go out and serve like he has served us, not to be humiliated, but to humbly walk with God. To do acts of service out of love, not because they are forced upon us.

The commandment Jesus gives us is to love, and love, real love, is never humiliating. Real love simply humbles us so that we can put the other person ahead of ourselves, to do acts of care that lift people up and never tear them down.

There is a tradition during this service to wash one another's feet, which we will not be doing during the service tonight, but you are welcome to do it with your family at home later on if you want to.

But I'll suggest that instead washing one another's feet that you contemplate doing a humble act of service for your neighbor instead. Maybe together as a family you can do some sort of surprise act of love for someone else that would keep in the spirit of foot washing.

I mean, how much fun would it be to go out tonight and do a random act of love as a means of washing someone else's feet? I think it could be really cool.

And if you don't want to go out, maybe write someone a letter, or if there is something that has been concerning you, write an elected official. Remember, it's about humble service, not humiliation for you or the other person.

Tonight we remember Jesus washing the disciples' feet and his command to love one another.

The water that Jesus washes the disciples' feet with is the same water used in baptism, which is the same water that passes through our eyes as tears of sadness and tears of joy. It is the same water that gives life to all of creation.

Water ties it all together, and water ties us all together.

Thanks be to God. Amen.