

Holy Thursday, Cycle C: 1 April, 2010

The events that transpire in the Liturgy of the Church over the next three (3) days are filled with symbolism and raw emotion which engage us not only emotionally and spiritually, but also sensually. There are sights, sounds, smells and silence that aid us in a personal reflection on the great message of salvation that will sweep over us on Easter Sunday. But, we can't have Easter Sunday without the events that occur in the Upper Room and then there is the death of our Lord on Calvary. I encourage you to always remember these events as teaching moments in which our Lord shows us what it means to be a servant.

You will recall that in the first century, it was a household slave who washed the feet of guests as they would arrive. No freedman would consider doing such a demeaning task and certainly not a rabbi or a "teacher"; however, what did our Lord do? He took on the role of a slave to teach not only the disciples, but you and I, what humility in service to others was all about.

Now in a few minutes, I will demonstrate once again the role of servant as I wash the feet of representative members of this parish. And what's behind this symbolism, you might ask? It demonstrates once again that we are called to be servants to our brothers and sisters, not only as co-religionists, but also sharers in the Kingdom of God. Ask yourself this question: if your parish priest will place himself in the position of a slave, what are you called to do? Well, you will, be called to be right there with me in spirit, as I represent you in this most humbling of tasks.

But the symbolism for the evening doesn't end there. Our Lord in the presence of the reserved hosts in the Ciborium and the Luna will leave the sanctuary and go into repose. Again we have a symbolic act that recalls Jesus' trip into the Garden, his trial before the Sanhedrin and eventual appearance before Pilate. We will be left without the physical presence of God in our worship space, in the person of Jesus, as he makes his journey to Calvary.

So, let us begin our journey this evening as slave and servant to one another.