

Maundy Thursday

With everyone locked up at home, except for sneak attacks to the grocery store, in a weird way we're in an environment not unlike the very first Maundy Thursday.

While it's a virus instead of Roman soldiers that's got the whole world frightened, the sense of dread, the lack of control, that oppressive smell in the air is maybe quite similar to what happened so long ago.

Tonight Jesus gathers his closest friends to once more teach them what real life looks like.

It's a lesson they won't learn tonight.

They won't begin to learn it for a few more days, when the unimaginable happens.

But, nevertheless, he teaches them.

Unlike the other gospels, which focus on the bread and the wine this night, John's gospel focuses on our feet.

While Matthew, Mark and Luke have Jesus taking ordinary bread and ordinary wine, the food and drink of the common people, and making them into something holy — John focuses on our feet.

Which was upsetting to the disciples, and perhaps is upsetting to one or two of us!

Even more so today than back then, our feet are kind of a private affair.

Many folks won't let even their spouse touch their feet.

Others are embarrassed by bunions or toe jam or who knows what else!

Feet, and more to the point, exposing our feet to one another, makes us vulnerable.

For those of us who are too cool for school — exposing our feet may be a humbling, if not humiliating, experience.

Yet what Jesus knows, what St John highlights in his gospel today, is that without vulnerability, without humility (that sometimes appears only after a healthy dose of humiliation) we really can't get anywhere near where Jesus wishes to take us.

And where he wishes to take us is to a place of openness and caring and respect and love for each other; a love that accepts one another, not despite our flaws, but indeed, in part, because of them.

Which makes our circumstance tonight so delightful.

Because, there you are, at home, and here I am, in the church building!

But no matter where we are, we are all of us the church, we are all of us the Body of Christ!

We few gathered here shall wash some feet.

You, gathered with yours at home, you too, wash some feet!

And as you wash, pay attention to how you are feeling, and what you are thinking.

And as you are washed, do the same!

Despite what the talking heads and all the commercials tell us, the real power in this world is love.

Love expressed in service, even lowly service, even cleaning one another's feet.

The real power in this world is love.

May love grow even stronger in you this night.

+amen