

A Reflection for Day 4 – Holy Wednesday

John 13:1-17

Jesus' last supper

As the week came towards its end, Jesus called his friends together for a last Passover supper. At the meal Jesus did something astonishing. Let's hear about what he did by listening to a reading from John 13: 1-17.

13 It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

²The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. ³Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; ⁴so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel round his waist. ⁵After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped round him.

⁶He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?'

⁷Jesus replied, 'You do not realise now what I am doing, but later you will understand.'

⁸'No,' said Peter, 'you shall never wash my feet.'

Jesus answered, 'Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.'

⁹'Then, Lord,' Simon Peter replied, 'not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!'

¹⁰ Jesus answered, 'Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.' ¹¹ For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

¹² When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. 'Do you understand what I have done for you?' he asked them. ¹³ 'You call me "Teacher" and "Lord", and rightly so, for that is what I am. ¹⁴ Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. ¹⁶ Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷ Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

Jesus knelt down and washed his disciples' feet. They were alarmed because they didn't expect him to wash their feet – that was a slave's job. They didn't understand why he did it. But Jesus told them that this humble job was a task they should do for each other. His followers should serve each other and serve others. I wonder if this could prompt us to think how we might serve others?

During the meal, Jesus took a piece of bread, said a prayer of blessing, broke the bread and gave it to each of his friends. He said 'this is my body which is given for you'. He took a cup of wine and, again after saying a prayer of blessing, he gave each one a sip of wine and said 'this is my blood which is shed for you'. He told them that, after he had died, they should continue to break bread and share wine together so that they'd remember him. The friends were really puzzled and they didn't understand.