

HOLY THURSDAY – Year C

Tonight the Church begins the Triduum with the celebration of Holy Thursday. As our Lord prepares for His upcoming journey to Jerusalem & His impending death & departure, He gathered His closest friends for one last meeting. This meeting is about preparing His disciples for His upcoming death & their mission after that. We could consider this meeting to be the one that Jesus prepares His disciples for His will. In His will, He did not leave with them worldly things, estate, or financial possessions. Instead, He left behind His whole self & mission with His disciples. Tonight we will re-open the will document of our Lord & re-live the last moments of Jesus with His disciples. This experience might make some of us cry, but it sure helps bring alive the memories of Jesus as we Christians commemorate the last moments of our leader here on earth two thousand years ago.

Let's now open the will document of Jesus & see what He wanted us to do after His death. Here's how today's Gospel tells us about the will of our Lord. It says, "Before the Feast of Passover, Jesus realized that the hour had come for Him to pass from this world to the Father. He had loved his won in this world, & would show His love for them to the end... During the Supper, Jesus... rose from the meal & took off His cloak. He picked up a towel & tied it around Himself. Then He poured water into a basin & began to wash His disciples' feet & dry them with the towel He had around Him... After He had washed their feet, He put His cloak back on, reclined at table, & said, '...If I washed your feet, then you must wash each other's feet. What I just did was to give you an example; as I have done, so you must do.'" Jesus apparently had the last supper with His disciples on this night & wanted them to repeat this ceremony as often as possible. During that meal, He also washed the feet of His disciples & reminded them to follow His example & learn to do the same for one another. That is the will & last testament of Jesus. We should make it our top priority to carry it out & honor Him that way. We should not let our will & agenda come before His. Otherwise, we would dishonor Him & disappoint Him.

Many Christians might do a good job of attending Mass faithfully during this scary Covid pandemic & carrying out the first part of Jesus' will as He asked them. But, for some reason, we forget to do the second part of His will. We find it difficult to wash the feet of our neighbors. Nowadays we find a bit challenging to love our neighbors unless they share the same political & social viewpoints with us. We let our morally corrupted political leaders tell us how to practice our Christian faith instead of listening to our Lord. We put our own will & benefits before the will & mission of Jesus & do whatever we want instead of following the dying wish of our Master. We like to fight & win the cultural war instead of bowing down & washing the feet of the poor & the outcast of society. We fail to show God's love to the world & preserve unity in Christ's Church. We unintentionally let down Jesus & allow the agenda of the world & ours to go before His. Perhaps tonight's ceremony would remind us of our Lord's will & help us switch to it.

As I've tried to find a good example of washing the feet of our neighbors around us as Jesus wished us to do, I've seen it being done by some host families to the refugees of the horrible War in Ukraine. That terrible war killed thousands of innocent people & displaced almost four million others. Those poor refugees have had to embark on a harrowing journey & look for safety in nearby countries. Many families in those countries, particularly the Polish ones, have opened their homes & welcomed those strangers. They have shown hospitality &

mercy to those victims without expecting anything in return. They have let their hearts to feel the pain of their neighbors & bowed down to take care of the misfortunate. That's what it means to wash the feet of our neighbors. I want to thank our parish for your generous donation to the Ukrainian people in their time of suffering & trying to carry out the will of our Lord Jesus. But, we have a long way to go yet as we still have many more feet of neighbors to wash in the days ahead.

My dear brothers & sisters, tonight's celebration helps us remember the will of Jesus & continue His legacy. We choose to be a Christian not to do our own will, or carry out the agenda of some worldly leader. Rather, we call ourselves Christians/Catholics because we answer Jesus' call to follow Him & continue His mission. His mission for us is to keep on celebrating His Last Supper & washing the feet of our neighbors. If we want to make Jesus proud & continue His legacy, we must have His caring heart & humble nature. Otherwise, we would never wash anyone's feet except our own. When we do that, we should not expect any reward from Jesus on the Last Day.