

HOMILY HOLY THURSDAY 2018

There is no greater love says the Lord,
then to lay down your life for a friend.
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In the Gospel reading today, Jesus asks the disciples a very important question. He asks them: “Do you realize what I have done for you?” I think Jesus came into the world in a human body to show us what love looks like. That is what he has done for us. He showed us what love looks like. At that first Holy Thursday, Jesus is surrounded by his disciples. Judas is there. Jesus knew that Judas betrayed him and sold him for 30 pieces of silver. I think we all know what is like when one of your closest friends betrays you. And Jesus knew that Peter is going to deny even knowing Jesus. Again, another deep hurt. And all of the disciples except John are going to desert him on the cross. Only Mary his mother, Mary the mother of Cleopas, Mary Magdalene and John are there with him at the foot of the cross when he dies. Another deep hurt. Jesus tells the disciples later that evening in the Garden of Gethsemane: “My heart is nearly broken with sorrow. Stay and keep watch with me.” But they cannot do it. They fall asleep. All of Jesus closest friends betrayed him. The deepest wounds come from the people we love the most. And what did Jesus do? He loved them. He showed us what love looks like.

Jesus washed their feet. All of them. All of the people who betrayed him. And that was a very humbling thing to do. You have to remember, the people at that time walked with open sandals. The roads were muddy and strewn with garbage. Animals shared the same road and there were no pooper scoopers. Their feet were dirty and it was a disgusting job. Only the lowest of the servants at that time were willing to do it, but Jesus, God washed their feet. Would

you have been willing to do something like that for the people who had just hurt you so deeply?
That is what love looks like.

And Jesus died on the cross for all of us. He died for all of our sins. He died for all of us who betrayed him. His suffering, death and resurrection are the reason why we are here today. If it were me I think I may have said: “All of you are betraying me, hurting me very deeply. I am not going to follow through with this for you.” But that is not what Jesus did. He showed us what love looks like. We are here today because of his great love.

Jesus tells us in the Gospel: “I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you also must do.” We need to follow the model that Jesus gives us if we want to be great in this world and in the next. I want to end with a quote from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: “Everybody can be great because anybody can serve. You don’t have to have a college degree to serve. You don’t have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace...and a soul generated by love.” Jesus showed us what love looks like, and his Holy Spirit gave us the gifts, the charisms to carry it out.