

## Holy Thursday – Year C 2026

**Exodus 12:1-8; Ps 115; Cor 11:23-26; John 13:1-15**

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The door to the upper room is closed. You are sitting close to Jesus. He is right here. You can see him, hear his voice, speak to him, notice that he is looking at you. Now listen:

*'This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me....' This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.'*<sup>1</sup>

With these words the sacred priesthood is founded. These words make the sacrament of love and sacrifice which will touch your lips.<sup>2</sup> Now and forever Jesus will be found amongst his people in the breaking of the bread. Jesus even gives Himself to the one who will betray him with a kiss – a sign of peace – Jesus does not withhold his love:

*'Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me...he to whom I will give this morsel of bread...'*<sup>3</sup>

But first he will wash his disciples' feet. This is not a prefigurative sign of Christian Baptism. It is the sign of a servant; of the depths of Christ's unfettered, self-giving love for his disciples; of what he wishes for them; of what he will do for them. That phrase that John uses for Jesus words '*For I have given you an example*' is translated from the Greek word *hypodeigma* which only appears a single time in the New Testament, here. This 'example' that Jesus gives is associated with the idea of an 'exemplary death', which presents itself a number of times in the Old Testament, such as in 2 Maccabees 6:28, 4 Maccabees 17:22 and Sirach

44:16. Used here, this 'example' of foot-washing that Jesus uses is a sign of his own coming passion and death. This washing of feet is presented not as an example of good moral behaviour, but as a Christ-like pattern of life.

Now Jesus will come amongst you to wash some of your feet. But it is not just a recollection of how he served and continues to serve others. Certainly not 'just'. It is a sign of how you are called to share in the depths of His love for others and for you to wash their feet, which does not mean taking off their shoes, but going to the cross for them. This is what it means to lay down your life for Christ. But be cautious. Remember that when Jesus has washed his disciples feet, Satan turns one of his close disciple's hearts away from him:

*So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas... Satan entered into him.*

The call to Christ, will attract the attention of the evil one. Be watchful and ready.

Now when the priest says to you '*The Blood of Christ*' and offers you the chalice you say '*Amen*' for truly it is. And when you take the chalice of his Precious Blood to your lips, you are drinking his Passion for yourself so that you might share his Passion, to become Christ-like. Take it to your lips with love, care and awe. Jesus is starting to wash you.

Finally, when I, as Christ, come to wash your feet, or your neighbours' feet, - don't hope that I pass you by, or be embarrassed, or withdraw - be prayerful, thankful and joyful, that Jesus chooses you to give Himself to. He offers it to all of you. It is the way of Divine Love. It is the way of the Cross.

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<sup>1</sup> Cor. 11: 24-25. ESV

<sup>2</sup> Le Dubec; A Year with the Liturgy. P 107

<sup>3</sup> John 13: 21-26