

Exodus 12:1-14; Psalm 116:1, 10-17; 1 Cor 1:23-26; John 13:1-17, 31b-35

Maundy Thursday– Year A – April 13, 2017

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We gather during this Holy Week to remember Jesus' last days just as our sister and brother Jews gather to remember the events in their communal life—the Passover. Riding back from Hartford Monday night I noticed many Jews walking home on Albany Avenue from the beginning of their Passover observances. God loved the Israelites beyond understanding and saved them from further bondage in slavery.

We gather to remember that God loves us beyond understanding by coming among us in human form to be love, to teach love, and to make a new way of love for all people. On this Holy Thursday, the monks from SSJE sent the following. Br. Jim Woodrum offered “By his wounds, we ARE BELOVED.” “Will you stay a little longer, reclining on His bosom; accepting the invitation to have your feet washed; following him to the cross and waiting in the wee hours of the morning for the sun to rise? If you have the courage to stay with Jesus, you may find as the Easter sun shines through these stained glass windows that the identity of the beloved disciple all this time has been you.”<sup>1</sup>

Jesus invited those early disciples to do something that was uncomfortable—something that still is uncomfortable for many of us as modern day disciples—to either have our feet washed or to wash the feet of another. Peter

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<sup>1</sup> Br. Jim Woodrum, SSJE, “We are Beloved: Brother, Give us a Word,” April 13, 2017.

said quickly, “You will never wash my feet,” and Jesus responded, “Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.” (John 13:8). This act of washing feet wasn’t only an act to show Jesus’ humility in serving. It was an act of love—love that’s not easy to understand. We have a tendency to dwell on the ugliness or the imperfectness or the sensitivity of our feet, which can make it difficult to offer up our feet to another.

I was talking with someone earlier who shared how a friend was taking a Boy Scout troop on a hike today. There was a sense of urgency to return early, so that her son might go home to wash his feet before he headed to church to serve as an Acolyte and have his feet washed tonight. She just laughed and said, “you know how boy’s feet are—sometimes they take a shower so quickly they forget to wash them!” It was important for that mom to know her son’s feet were clean before they were offered up for the real washing.

Jesus asked the disciples, “Do you know what I have done to you?” (John 13:12). That’s an interesting question as we continue through this night and into Good Friday and Holy Saturday and Easter. “Do you know what I have done to you?”

What is the love poured out this night all about for you? I believe Jesus empowers each of us to love, amid the betrayal, amid our discomfort, amid the denial, amid the voices silenced that may have wanted to shout out “Won’t somebody stop what’s about to happen to Jesus?”

Jesus' new commandment is for each of us, "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34-35).

Jesus asks us all this night and everyday, "Do you know what I have done to you?"

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