

Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper

Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart

People often describe the same event in different ways. I love to sit with my sisters the morning after a big party, wedding or other celebration and hear them chatter about what they saw and heard the night before. They were all at the same party but each one's version of it is just a little different.

Tonight did we hear two stories about the same event? Sure we did. Have you ever wondered why the Word of God offers these two distinct accounts of the meal Jesus shared with his closest disciples on the night before he died?

The second reading tonight was taken from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians and is probably the oldest report of what Jesus did the night he was betrayed. You remember how that reading recalls the words that Jesus pronounced over the bread at the beginning of that last meal he ate with his disciples, as well as the words he pronounced over the wine at the meal's conclusion. That is the first account,

Then, the Gospel reading from John tells the story of Jesus washing the feet of the disciples, seemingly giving that action the place of honor in the account of the Last Supper. There is no mention made of Jesus' words over the bread and the cup. What do these two versions ask us to ponder tonight?

Let us begin by zeroing in on what Jesus said over the bread and cup. He named the bread and wine his body and his blood. In the culture of that time, body and blood were not seen as two separate parts of a human being, as we now assume. Rather, the people believed that God's breath resides in the blood, which is the life force within humans. The body is the means through which that life force manifests itself outwardly. In effect, "this is my body...my blood" mean "this is me." The phrases linked with those two words tell us what Jesus meant by those prayers. He was saying, "I am to be "given up for you," ... "I am poured out for you and the many."

Jesus words refer to his death that will take place on the following day. His death will be his saving act made in loving service for "the many." When he said, "do this in memory of me," he commanded the disciples, and us, not only to repeat his actions at that supper, but also to follow his example of giving ourselves in loving service to others, even when it is as costly as it was to him. That kind of love is an essential part of the "this" Jesus asks us to do in his memory.

Washing their feet was an act of humble service for his disciples. Foot-washing was restricted to slaves and servants. It was something the disciples were to do in turn. "As I have

done, so also you must do.” Can you see that the two commands that we remember on this night are really one and the same? They both call us to give ourselves, to pour out ourselves in loving service to our sisters and brothers in their needs. Tonight the Word of God asks us: to whom do we now owe this service? For whom will our body be broken and our blood poured out? Whose feet should be wash?

If we look around, the Lord will help us answer those questions. What a gift God has given us in Pope Francis who bends down to the simple and suffering, and reaches out to the forgotten of our society. Jesus and His Vicar move and motivate us, challenge and encourage us. With our Holy Father we pray: “Jesus, help us to think like you, act like you, love like you.”

Each of us hears in our own vocation the same command of Jesus, expressed tonight in two different ways: *Do this in memory of me/what I have done, so also you must do.* We pray: “Jesus, help us to think like you, act like you, love like you.” We ask ourselves, “For whom will our body be broken and our blood poured out? Whose feet should we wash?”

Lavarse los pies fue un acto de humilde servicio para con sus discípulos. Se sabe que el lavado de pies estaba restringido a esclavos y sirvientes. Sin embargo, el ejemplo de Jesús era algo que los discípulos debían hacer a su vez. Como he hecho, también tú debes hacerlo.” Puedes ver que los dos mandamientos que recordamos en esta noche son realmente uno y el mismo. Ambos nos llaman a darnos, a derramarnos en servicio amoroso a nuestras hermanas y hermanos en sus necesidades.

Esta noche la Palabra de Dios nos pregunta: ¿A quién le debemos este servicio? ¿Por quién será entregado nuestro cuerpo y derramada nuestra sangre? ¿A quién deben lavarse los pies?

Si miramos alrededor, el Señor nos ayudará a responder a estas preguntas. Qué regalo nos ha dado Dios en el Papa Francisco, que se inclina hacia los sencillos que sufren, y alcanza llegar a los olvidados de nuestra sociedad. Jesús y su Vicario nos conmueven y nos motivan, nos desafían y nos animan. Con nuestro Santo Padre oramos: “Jesús, ayúdanos a pensar como tú piensa, actuar como tú actúas, amar como tú amas”.

Cada uno de nosotros escucha en nuestra propia vida el mandamiento de Jesús, el mismo mandamiento que se exprime en dos maneras: “Haz esto en conmemoración mía” y “también Uds. hagan como yo he hecho con ustedes”.

Pidámosle: “Jesús, ayúdanos a pensar como tú, actuar como tú, amar como tú”.

Y en esta santa noche después de comulgar, preguntémonos: ¿Por quién será entregado mi cuerpo y derramada mi sangre? ¿A quién debo lavarse los pies?