

Maundy Thursday

A reflection on the servanthood of Jesus

The day is well recognized for the commencement of the sacrament of communion, (in the context of the Passover meal), but less celebrated for the foot washing event. 1 Tim 5:10 could mean that the early church actually practiced the ritual, or alternatively it could be an analogy for pious service. Jn 13:1-15 contains the record of this event. Orthodox, oriental and traditional churches practice this ritual on Maundy Thursday in the build up to "Holy Week", as do a number of modern Protestant churches. The foot washing ceremony is performed to dramatically show that the pope/bishop/pastor is servant of all in the community. Among groups that do not observe foot washing as an ordinance or ritual, the example of Jesus is usually held to be symbolic and didactic.

Most scholars agree that the English word *Maundy* is derived from the Middle English and old French word '*mandé*' and from the Latin '*mandatum*'. *Madnatun* is the first word of the phrase "Mandatum novum do vobis ut diligatis invicem sicut dilexi vos", meaning "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you". This is commandment Jesus gave as he explained to the Apostles the significance of his action of washing their feet.

1. Does your church ever practice foot washing in home/cell groups or in the service?
2. Do you have a church service on Maundy Thursday?
3. Look at the paintings, some quite ancient and others modern. Which is your favourite?
4. Which painting best represents what Jesus meant to convey at this Passover meal?
5. Do you know if kings, queens, popes or dictators have ever washed the feet of a person of no note in public? So how does this action reflect on the King of kings?
6. Could Muslims easily picture Mohammad doing this action?
7. "It is possible to foot wash, doing the external good works without having a real heart for what Jesus is commanding." Comment on this statement
8. Read Mark 10:35-45 and write a short reflection on what this passage means to you.
9. Explain how you could "foot wash" someone during this Easter period.

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