

March 13, 2022

Second Sunday of Lent

Jesus washes feet

John 13:1-17

The gospel reading this morning comes from Maundy Thursday. Which in English translates as Mandate Thursday. I think we have all had an education on mandates over the past two years. Yet the mandate that Jesus gives us and sets by His example is that we should serve. Just as He served the disciples by washing their feet. The role of the foot washer was the lowest servant role in their master's house. Jesus sets the bar very high for us by going low.

I challenge you to stretch your minds and how you think about serving and being a servant. Our Lord said that the greatest person is the one who serves others. I would say that in order of Christianity to work properly there must be service and the servant. Stop and think about how you serve others and how they serve you! Let's take it a bit farther and think about how God serves us. Well God serves us by providing for our needs. The things like: water, air, food, safety and shelter. We serve God by keeping His mandates and commandments so that society and the church can run smoothly.

As I said earlier, that we serve others. That if everyone serves, not one is left unserved. Mostly we serve people in order to help them meet their daily needs. Think about new ways to serve others during Lent. Have you ever thought about serving others just by listening? This type of service does not require a lot of physical energy. It does require you to focus your attention. The discipline to keep your mouth shut and let the other person talk. Open your ears to what people are saying to you and also the words that they are not saying. Sometimes being a good listener is very hard in other ways. People get a lot of comfort in knowing that you are listening. Afterwards you may even be able to offer some good advice.

Another great way to serve others is just by you being there. That you are in their company during a difficult time in their life. Most of the time you do not have to say a word. Just your being there is powerful enough. You can listen to their words and body language. You can serve people by being present.

Finally, another great way to serve others is to pray. Many times we don't think of prayer as serving others. Yet it is. I like to think of prayer as creating positive energy. When we are praying we are sending that energy to the person we are praying for. It can brighten a person's bad day or change the situation completely. Similar to how a complement can brighten a person's day and change their mood or outlook. When we pray together in church we are serving God by offering our thanksgiving to Him. We are serving people by taking the time to pray for them and their situation. We serve God by taking the time to pray and offer Him our thanksgiving.

Three very different ideas about serving. It is taking the time to think of the needs of others. Those needs can be very different as we have read here. Christianity is founded on the mandate Jesus set for us. That we should serve. That we should serve everyone and not just Christians or those in our church. Service is everywhere: others serve us, we serve others, God serves us, we serve God. There are so many ways to think how we can serve others and God. Take the time this Lent and explore the whole idea of service.

Lenten Reflection: Breaking bread together.

Acts 2:42b, “and fellowship in the breaking of bread and in prayers.”

The early Christian community is holding steadfast to the words of Our Lord. Who on Maundy Thursday gave us an important mandate? That when we gather we should remember Him and break bread. In other words we should have Eucharist and remember Him and His words and mandate.

St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians would most likely be the first written account of Maundy Thursday. We know he wrote before the gospel writers. The account of Maundy Thursday's events were being told and passed around by word of mouth. Paul writes it down and sent it to the Corinthian church. 1 Cor 11: 23-25, “ For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night in which He was betrayed , took bread and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “ Take , eat, this is my body which is broken for you , do this in remembrance of Me.” Later Jesus says similar over the cup of wine. It has been generally understood that when Christians gathered to pray

and remember Jesus this was how they did it. Later the gospel writers would write their accounts of that evening.

Other times when Christians gathered they would have an agape meal. That was very similar to our idea of pot-luck today. Everyone brought whatever they could or had on hand. Early Christians gathered around meals. We are not very different from them. We gather around the Lord's table for Eucharist and we gather in the church basement for meals as a community.

I have often thought that what goes on in the basement is equally important as that in the sanctuary. Fellowship around food is what built and sustained the church for two thousand years. The soul is fed upstairs and the body downstairs. The kitchen is just as important as the altar.

Fellowship strengthens and encourages the bonds and connections in the community. Possibly at no other time as now, is this so important. To gather for the breaking of the bread and drinking of wine in church and the sharing of food and a coffee in the church hall. WE do all of this because we remember Him and His mandate. Do not underestimate the great importance and grace contained in both. God bless you all and may my words be a comfort this Lent.

Pastor Daren O' Gaelbhain, kiss a leprechaun this week.