

Maundy Thursday is a day of transition. Momentum shifts on this day. The light darkens. Shadows lengthen. General ideas about “the Lenten journey” become specific items¹: a towel, a bowl, oil, a cup, some bread.

This is the night we remember Jesus’ last night. Jesus gathered intimately with his friends for a meal. He gave them a mandate to love, and showed them what that command meant – not just to love in some abstract way, but to love as Christ loved them.

This love unfolded that night in the upper room and in then in the garden where Jesus gathered his friends in prayer. When violence arrived in the form of a kiss of betrayal and a crowd with clubs and swords, and one of his friends laid his hand on his own sword, Jesus quelled him: *Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.*

This love continued the next day when Jesus refused to be anyone except who he was – the son of God – and the powers that be, in their fear, put him to death.

This love was so strong that it was buried in the tomb – and then rolled the stone away – because it was stronger than even death.

Christ’s love is more than just feelings. You can’t command feelings. However you can command choices – the choice of loving behaviors and Christ-like actions,² as he showed us over and over throughout his life, through his death, and even once he was raised from the dead.

¹ James E. Lamkin, *Pastoral Perspective, Feasting on the Word*, Year B, Volume 2.

² James E. Lamkin, *Pastoral Perspective, Feasting on the Word*, Year B, Volume 2.

This is why on this night we make ourselves vulnerable and wash one another's feet. But, it is about more than that one act – because it is a commandment for our whole lives, not one liturgy.

And so tonight, in addition to the foot washing, you may choose to have your hands anointed for holy service – and outward and visible sign of your inner choice to live Jesus' final commandment.

In the words of Saint Teresa of Avila:

Christ has no body now but yours.

No hands, no feet on earth but yours.

Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on the world.

Yours are the feet in which he walks to do good.

Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world.

Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body.

Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

Let us be Christ's body – his hands, feet, and eyes – in our broken world, tonight and every day going forth.

~ AMEN ~