

Lent Reflections 2024 -Through the Desert God Leads us to Freedom- Pope Francis

Holy Week 25th -30th March – Passiontide- Holy Thursday – Good Friday – Holy Saturday

Reading- Holy Thursday Gospel John 13:1-15- New Jerusalem translation

Before the festival of the Passover, Jesus, knowing that his hour had come to pass from this world to the Father, having loved those who were his in the world, loved them to the end. They were at supper, and the devil had already put it into the mind of Judas Iscariot son of Simon, to betray him.

Jesus knew that the Father had put everything into his hands, and that he had come from God and was returning to God, and he got up from table, removed his outer garments and, taking a towel, wrapped it round his waist; he then poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel he was wearing.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet? Jesus answered, 'At the moment you do not know what I am doing, but later you will understand. 'Never!' said Peter. 'You shall never wash my feet.' Jesus replied, 'If I do not wash you, you can have no share with me.' Simon Peter said, 'Well then, Lord, not only my feet, but my hands and my head as well!' Jesus said, 'No one who has had a bath needs washing, such a person is clean all over. You too are clean, though not all of you are. 'He knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said, 'though not all of you are'.

When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments again he went back to the table. 'Do you understand', he said, 'what I have done to you? You call me Master and Lord, and rightly; so I am. If I then, the Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you must wash each other's feet. I have given you an example so that you may copy what I have done to you.

Reflection -Today our Lenten journey reaches its climax in the Triduum of the Passion. Just a few days ago on Palm Sunday we celebrated Jesus triumphal entry into Jerusalem, but the mood has changed over the days since then. Now it is the day of the Passover in honour of the Lord, celebrating the escape of the Israelites from Egypt. "For all generations you are to declare it a day of festival, for ever. "Exodus 12:14

John's Gospel does not give us any details of the Passover meal and what took place at the table, but concentrates on two things. First he focuses on the events that are to take place on Good Friday. He knew that the hour had come for his ultimate sacrifice of suffering and death on the cross- showing his perfect love for all humanity.

Secondly he gets up from the table and removes his clothes kneels and washes the feet of his disciples and wipes them with the towel he is wearing. Simon Peter realises what this means- Jesus their Lord and master is taking on the job which is the slave or servant's job. What great humility Jesus is showing to us in this moment. It is a very solemn occasion when we recognise God's unfailing, gift of abundant love and mercy for each of us- "I have given you an example so that you may copy what I have done for you."

At the same time Peter is quite emphatic that Jesus would not wash his feet- 'You shall never wash my feet.' Why did he react so strongly? How would I have reacted? Remember this tomorrow when you read in the Passion narrative of Peter's denial of knowing Jesus three times. Perhaps something to reflect on over the next few days.

Quiet Reflection-

Points to ponder

- The Passover, being a time of remembering – perhaps I could look back over the past remembering God’s goodness in my life. “How can I repay the Lord for his goodness to me?” Psalm 115
- Spend time thanking God for the gift of receiving Jesus body and blood in the Eucharist.
- God sent his Son to be servant to us and encouraged us to follow his example. What service do I give to others today?
- It is also the moment to look forward and prepare immediately for the death of Jesus to be celebrated tomorrow. Let us pray for the love, generosity and courage to face the sufferings in our own life in the days and months ahead.

Closing Prayers (From Cafod Lent Reflections)

Holy Thursday

Humble God, wash away our pride and lead us to serve one another as your Son has taught us. May we always be willing to uphold the dignity of others, especially those who are overlooked or ignored in our world. Amen.

Good Friday

Redeeming God, as we witness to your love for us all, poured out on the cross, inspire us to work for peace and healing, knowing that you are always alongside us. Amen.

Holy Saturday

God of stillness, the small voice of calm, whisper your words of peace in our hearts as we look forward with hope to the joy of the resurrection. Amen.