

# Foot Washing Ritual

Foot washing has been a Holy Thursday practice since as early as the seventh century. A concrete representation of our call to service, foot washing reminds us of Jesus' example and command. If we truly understand this command, however, we realize that we are called to do more than literally wash feet. Rather, this is a ritual that reminds us of our call to serve others through the concrete realities of life.

You'll need a pitcher with water, a large bowl, and the towel from your Holy Week Kit.

## Opening Prayer

*Loving God, You show us by example how to love others. Today as we celebrate Holy Thursday, we remember when you washed the feet of your disciples. Give us the strength to wash each other's feet, not only in the ritual moment of today, but in all moments of our lives. May we recommit ourselves to the service of others. We ask this through Christ, our Lord.*

## Reading: John 13: 1 - 15

Before the feast of Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to pass from this world to the Father. He loved his own in the world and he loved them to the end. The devil had already induced Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot, to hand him over.

So, during supper, fully aware that the Father had put everything into his power and that he had come from God and was returning to God, he rose from supper and took off his outer garments. He took a towel and tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and dry them with the towel around his waist.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Master, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing, you do not understand now, but you will understand later." Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "Unless I wash you, you will have no inheritance with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Master, then not only my feet, but my hands and head as well." Jesus said to him, "Whoever has bathed has no need except to have his feet washed, for he is clean all over; so you are

clean, but not all." For he knew who would betray him; for this reason, he said, "Not all of you are clean."

So when he had washed their feet and put his garments back on and reclined at table again, he said to them, "Do you realize what I have done for you? You call me 'teacher' and 'master,' and rightly so, for indeed I am. If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do."

### **Washing of Feet**

Invite everyone to remove their shoes and socks.

One person may wash the feet of all present or each person may take a turn, washing the feet of their neighbor after their own feet have been washed. After washing each person's feet, gently dry their feet with the towel.

### **Prayers of the Faithful**

For all who serve in our church: May they follow the example of Christ and uphold the dignity of all people. Lord, hear our prayer.

For all who serve in our community and country: May they work for the good of all people, especially people who are poor and relegated to the margins of society. Lord, hear our prayer.

For all who serve others every day, especially parents, guardians, teachers, coaches, and all who practice selflessness and self-gift: May they find comfort and hope knowing that their actions make a difference to so many. Lord, hear our prayer.

For all gathered here: May we live lives of service to God and others, even when it is difficult or requires extra effort. Lord, hear our prayer.

### **Our Father**

*Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.*