

**LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS I HAVE LOVED YOU:  
A Maundy Thursday Devotion  
April 9, 2020**

PRAYER

Holy God, source of all love, on the night of his betrayal, Jesus gave us a new commandment, to love one another as he loves us. Write this commandment in our hearts and give us the will to serve others as he was the servant of all, Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

*John 13: 2b – 9, 12 -17, 34 – 35*

*And during supper, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." Peter said, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!"*

*After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord – and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.*

*I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you should also love one another.*

REFLECTION

"God so loved the world," writes John in his Gospel. He went on to write today's Gospel reading, offering a vivid picture of God loving the world through Jesus' physical, tangible love. Jesus kneeling before his friends, taking a towel, pouring the water, washing and drying their feet. Dear friends of his, friends he was about to be separated from by death.

When people reminisce about a death, they often comment on how much they miss touching their loved one. They want to hold her hand again, to snuggle into his shoulder, to get a hug and give one. The image of foot washing gives us an opportunity to imagine Jesus loving like that. A touch, an embrace, a hug. This is a bit disorienting, because we don't imagine Jesus being close enough to reach out and hold our foot in his hand. It's easier to imagine Jesus as a teacher or a Savior than a hugger. Even Peter seems nervous about being loved. "Don't wash my feet!" he says. Sometimes we, too, seek a different kind of relationship with Jesus, more like an agreement than love: "Lord, I'll do my best and I know you'll be with me, and together we will do good things in this world." But so often love demands bigger risks, more commitment, more physical presence in the life of another. *Love. Love one another. With a touch, an embrace, a hug, the washing of feet.* It's scary but beautiful, and always brings into focus the vulnerability of the one who can risk doing such a thing. Jesus loves that way. Jesus loves *us* that way.

*"Love one another, as I have loved you,"* he says, and maybe the world needs us to say, *"I'll risk it"*.

#### A PRAYER OF MARTIN LUTHER

Behold, Lord, an empty vessel that needs to be filled. My Lord, fill it. I am weak in faith; strengthen me. I am cold in love; warm me and make me fervent, that my love may go out to my neighbor. I do not have a strong and firm faith; at times I doubt and am unable to trust you altogether. O Lord, help me. Strengthen my faith and trust in you. In you I have sealed the treasure of all I have. I am poor; you are rich, and you came to be merciful to the poor. I am a sinner; you are righteous. Therefore, I will remain with you. Amen.

#### BLESSING

Go forth in love. Have courage. Hold on to what is good. Return no one evil for evil. Help the suffering. Honor all people and love and serve the Lord. Almighty God, Father, + Son and Holy Spirit bless you this day and always. Amen.