



The Holy See

MASS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

New penitentiary complex in the port city of Civitavecchia (north of Rome)

Holy Thursday, 14 April 2022

[Multimedia]

Every Holy Thursday we read this Gospel passage: it is a simple thing. Jesus, with his friends, his disciples, is at supper, the Passover supper. Jesus washes the feet of his disciples — he has done a strange thing: at that time, feet were washed by slaves at the entrance to the house. And then, Jesus — with a gesture that also touches the heart — washes the feet of the traitor, the one who sells him. That's how Jesus is, and he teaches us this, simply: you must wash each other's feet. This is the symbol: among you, you must serve each other; one serves the other, without interest. How beautiful it would be if this were possible to do every day and to all people, but there is always interest, which is like a snake that enters.

And we are scandalised when we say: “I went to that public office, they made me pay a fee”. This causes harm, because it is not good. And we, many times in life seek our own interest, as if we charged each other a fee. It is important rather, to do everything without interest: one serves the other, one is the other's brother, one makes the other grow, one encourages the other, and that is how we must make things progress. Serving! And then, the heart of Jesus, which says to the traitor: “Friend”, and even waits for him, until the end: He forgives everything.

I would like this to reach the hearts of all of us today, including my own: God forgives everything and God forgives always! We are the ones who grow tired of asking for forgiveness. Each of us, perhaps, has something there in our heart which we have been carrying for some time, which goes “ron-ron” [which agitates], some skeleton hidden in the closet. But ask Jesus for forgiveness: He forgives everything. All he wants is our trust to ask for forgiveness. You can do it when you are

alone, when you are with others, when you are with the priest. This is a beautiful prayer for today: “But, Lord, forgive me. I will seek to serve others, but You serve me with Your forgiveness”. He paid the price like this, with forgiveness. This is the thought I would like to leave you today. Serving, helping one another and being certain that the Lord forgives. And how much does he forgive? Everything! And until what point? Always! He does not tire of forgiving. We are the ones who grow tired of asking for forgiveness.

And now, I will try to imitate Jesus’ gesture: washing feet. I do it with care because we priests should be the first to serve others, not to take advantage of them. Clericalism sometimes takes us along this path. But we must serve. This is a sign, also a sign of love for these brothers and sisters and for all of you, here; a sign that says: “I judge no one. I try to serve everyone”. There is One who judges, but he is a rather strange Judge, the Lord: He judges and forgives. Let us follow this ceremony with the desire to serve and forgive.

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