

Maundy Thursday 4/9/2020
Ken Wratten at St Luke's

After Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, he told them, "I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you." The example was not about washing feet. It was about serving each other.

When Jesus had finished the Passover meal with his disciples, he shared bread and wine with them, and instituted what later became Communion. His goal in sharing the bread and the wine was that they would remember him as they faced what he knew was coming. He was honoring what he knew they would be going through.

The stripping of the altar might seem to be about our imagining life without Jesus. But all of the Triduum (Thu through Sat) is about us remembering, or realizing to a new level, what Jesus endured for us. The stripped altar reminds us of the isolation he felt as Judas betrayed him; as he prayed alone in the Garden of Gethsemane; as his disciples would soon deny him as their teacher.

The message for us is that Jesus' earthly ministry, his teachings about the heart of God being filled with love for each of us, and his lessons from this Thursday night with his disciples – all are about how much Jesus loved them and loves us.

It is about how much he honored them, and had a commitment to show us his servant's heart. THEN he gave the New Commandment, that we are to love one another. Just as he loved us, we should love one another.

We are now seeing, maybe more powerfully than ever, the servant hearts of fire fighters,

police,

doctors,

nurses,

emt's,

grocery clerks,

bank tellers, and on and on.

You and I wash our hands,
wear masks in public,
back up to be six feet apart –
but I learned over the past couple of weeks that I can approach all of
these limitations in one of two ways...

I can let fear control my behavior, as I keep a distance from others,

or I can choose love and honoring to control my behavior. I have been
choosing love and honoring for everybody...

I want to protect them from what I might be carrying.

I want to honor their well being.

I want to lower their anxiety.

I want to communicate through my actions and tone of voice that I am
not anxious or fearful, but I will be careful to show my caring about the
people around me.

I think THAT is Jesus' message to us through his actions of washing
feet, and his words about remembering him every time they eat or drink.

Jesus said, "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you
have love for one another."

May his love guide us through this time of separation and isolation –
and into the 'new normal' that will follow.