

APRIL 29, 2021
Memorial of St. Catherine of Siena, Virgin & Doctor of the Church
John 13: 16-20

“SERVE WITH LOVE AND HUMILITY”

Every Holy Thursday, we commemorate the washing of the feet of the apostles and the institution of the Eucharist, which are related to one another. Washing of the feet signifies service, humility and love, which ultimately shows in the breaking of the bread, the Eucharist which symbolizes giving, sharing, and living.

Jesus is teaching us in our gospel for today the way we can be followers of Him. He instructed His disciples after washing their feet to be servants. He showed them how to be humble, ready to stoop down, and serve others through goodness and kindness. “It would not be quite right to see Jesus washing his disciples’ feet as a humbling of himself. Service in the Gospel is primarily love in action. Love (agape, ‘agaph) is the desire for the well-being of the other. That love is actualised by service, by the doing of acts for the good of the other. It is the act of brothers and sisters to and for each other.”¹ Jesus Christ presented to them what love is – serving others with humility and doing it without counting the cost. Even to the ‘person who will betray Him,’ He shared the food and dined with him, symbolizes friendship, camaraderie, and acceptance. “Jesus expresses his love, affection, and loyalty to those who were his own, even to the one he knew would “stab him in the back” when he got the opportunity. Jesus used a quotation from Psalm 4:9 which describes an act of treachery by one's closest friend. In the culture of Jesus' day, to eat bread with someone was a gesture of friendship and trust. Jesus extends such friendship to Judas right at the moment when Judas is conspiring to betray his master.”²

¹ livingspace.sacredspace.ie

² www.dailyscripture.net

My brothers and sisters, even if we are not worthy to be here and receive Him in the Eucharist, we answered His call to share and dine with Him. He accepted us even if we are sinners and unworthy because He loves us. Even if we sometimes betrayed Him along the way, still Jesus is willing to have a meal with us in this Eucharist. But unlike the one who betrayed Him, we are willing to change, ask for forgiveness, and try our best to do His will and serve Him through our brothers and sisters.

St. Catherine of Siena responded to that call and in her early age, dedicated herself to Jesus as her groom. She worked for the poor, sick and those vulnerable. She was instrument of bringing peace in Italy and gave advices to popes, kings and simple people. She persuaded Pope Gregory XI to return to Rome from Avignon, France where the papacy resided for 67 years. Her life, mystical holiness and spiritual works earned her as one of the four women Doctors of the Church. What is attracted to Catherine is her total and complete surender to Christ. Despite opposition, conflict, and resistance, she remained steadfast on her mission and calling for unity in the Church, service to the poor, and dedicated prayer life. So, let us ask her intercession to be prayerful and listen to the voice of God, act on it and be messengers of peace and reconciliation with our brothers and sisters. St. Catherine of Siena, pray for us.